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Beyond Words: 9/11 and the Reflective Lens

by

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled BEYOND WORDS: 9/11 and the Reflective Lens submitted by JANICE LYNN NAOMI SHIGEMI in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATON in COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY.

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October 15 2002

To those who have braved the long road home.

Abstract

The present study captured the heuristic process of the researcher following the events of September 11th, 2001. The inquiry used photography and written reflection. Each photographic image was responded to on three levels including a direct response to 9/11, a personal reflection, and a response from the point of view of a novice therapist. Ten themes emerged during the process including: wounding, grieving, retreating, remembering childhood, struggling, searching, noticing, choosing, coming home, and accepting. The study began as an inquiry and culminated in a healing journey. A creative synthesis combined an image and an echo. The image was symbolic of the experience of the inquiry and the echo reflected the learnings in the journey.

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CHAPTER ONE

Beyond Words: 9/11 and the Reflective Lens

"As long as life is meaningful, people tend to think and speak relatively little about its meaning. But as soon as there is a lack or absence of meaning, the problem of meaning plays an important role in a person's awareness and expression". (Weirshopf-Joelson, 1968, p. 32)

Introduction

At no point in recent history has there been as great a surge in the search for meaning as post September 11th, 2001. The co-ordinated terrorist attacks and subsequent loss of life that occurred in the United States on the fateful day also known as 9/11, had what many would describe as a profound effect on society. As a graduate student and therapist in training I felt a powerful connection to this tragic event. It not only changed the world as I knew it, but stirred a troubled spot within me that had been asking to be healed. This event that sent many searching for meaning in their lives became the meaningful topic that I had been seeking as a focus for my thesis. In essence September 11th became a catalyst for self-growth.

Entering into this profession I feel I have been given an incredible opportunity to play a significant role in people's lives, to take part in their deepest sorrows, fears, and joys. This lends a unique quality to my professional relationship that is unlike any other. Because I have the potential to impact the lives of people when they are most vulnerable, I feel it is imperative that I know as much as I can about myself and what I bring into the relationship. The direction and rate of change in my clients is influenced not only by the skills I have acquired in my formal training, but by my awareness of how I have integrated change into my own life. Significant events that have shaped my past were inviting me to re-visit them in the wake of September 11th. The present study is an

opportunity for growth, a challenge for self-discovery, and a personal rite of passage into the profession. As such it is a heuristic inquiry.

Rationale for the study

> *"Should you really open your eyes and see, you would behold your image in all images. And should you open your ears and listen, you would hear your own voice in all voices". (Kahlih Gibran, 1926, p. 17)*

At times the impact of shared life experience can be overlooked because of the complexity and rate of change within our society. The September 11th terrorist attacks in the United States is a very recent example of a life event that has impacted lives on a global scale. Its cultural and political relevance renders it a common factor in the lives of virtually everyone alive today. News articles and television programs continue to reflect society's fear, vulnerability, grief, and anger.

Reflecting on the months leading up to September 11th, I recognize that I was for the most part very unhappy. Midway through a graduate program and struggling under a heavy workload I was juggling personal as well as professional challenges. I was beginning to develop competence as a therapist, yet I sensed that as a person I was still yearning to grow. Unaware that the difficulties I was experiencing were minuscule droplets compared to the torrent yet to come, I managed to keep my head above water. By September 11th I believe that a part of me had approached a point of collapse. I likely exemplified what Jourard (1971a) referred to as mental and physical illness, albeit not visible to the observer of my everyday life. Jourard (1971a) considered illness as evidence that the way an individual had been living to the point of collapse has been outgrown and that it is time for them to stop that way of life and invent a new way more

compatible with wellness. For me, September 11th was an invitation to revisit old wounds, learn whatever I could, and redefine myself.

There is a general agreement that loss in the present may awaken feelings of loss in the past (Janoff-Bulman, 1992 & Storr, 1988). Mental-health services were mobbed following September 11th and many of my own clients began processing unresolved grief. In order to foster an authentic therapeutic relationship with my clients I wanted to have a deeper understanding of my own reaction to this historical event. As Jourard (1971) introspects, "I can come closest to eliciting and reinforcing authentic behaviour in my patient by manifesting it myself" (p. 141).

While a variety of studies have investigated grief reactions in clinical populations (Parkes & Weiss, 1983; Schneider, 1984), virtually no research has studied the grief reaction and first hand experience of a mental health professional, particularly following a significant world event. Moustakas (1990) wrote that although the heuristic process is autobiographical, "with virtually every question that matters personally, there is also a social and perhaps universal significance" (p. 15). With this research I hope to contribute to the literature on reflective practice and demonstrate the benefits of promoting self-awareness in the training of mental health professionals. In his well-known writings on searching for self Rollo May (1953) noted that, "human experience always goes beyond our particular methods of understanding it at any given moment, and the best way to understand one's identity as a self is to look into one's own experience" (p. 91).

Intervening factors and situations as well as my own need for peace have enabled me to maintain a distance from myself for a long time. Years of being immersed in academia have led to a higher reliance on cognitive processes over feeling ones.

Working in the helping field and tending to the needs of others has also allowed my focus to be on others instead of myself. George Howard (1989) quoted Saul Bellows as saying, "It is risky to speak in one's own voice, but it reminds us that the sources of truest truths are inevitably and profoundly personal. Academics very seldom offer themselves publicly and frankly as individuals, as persons" (p. VI). September 11th provided me with the opportunity to take a risk and offer myself up. The aftermath of that day fuelled an underlying feeling of loneliness and served almost eerily as a premonition for other events that were to take place in my life. It was the opportunity that I needed to take a risk and begin searching.

Statement of the Question

How can life retain its potential meaning in spite of its tragic aspects? Victor Frankl's (1946) reflection on "tragic optimism" or optimism in the face of tragedy was eerily relevant on the morning of September 11th . The questions that Frankl explored after his experience of being interned in a Nazi concentration camp can be reflected upon again today. How does one "turn suffering into a human achievement and accomplishment, derive from guilt the opportunity to change oneself for the better, and derive from life's transitories an incentive to take responsible action (p. 162)"? These monumental questions can both encourage self-reflection and create anxiety. Many individuals including myself have hoped to avoid being faced with the challenge of searching for answers.

My intent in the present study was to enter into and explore my personal feeling of loneliness that emerged following September 11th, and take steps toward healing and self-growth. In essence this study addresses the questions: "What was my experience of

grief and loneliness following September 11th and what am I learning that I can bring with me into my therapeutic relationships?" My professional goal with this research is two fold. I want to experiment with the use of photography as a means of heightening self-awareness. I also hope to promote self-reflection as an integral component of professional development.

Overview of the study

When I was formulating the idea for the present study it was my initial intent to combine journalling and pencil drawings. Not previously exposed to the art of photography I was hesitant when it was suggested I try it as well. Uncertain of where to begin I picked up my camera and went for a walk in nature. I was immediately engaged, and photography became the primary medium for this study. The camera was the start to an intimate, exciting and challenging journey of discovery.

To best convey the process that I underwent post September 11th, I have thematically assembled images that I captured in the months following. These are presented in the fifth chapter along with spontaneous self-reflective writings. I will begin by providing a glimpse into the events of September 11th as well as a personal reaction. A brief review of the literature on the therapeutic use of photography follows.

CHAPTER TWO:

9/11

A day like no other

It was a beautiful crisp fall day in New York City on Tuesday September 11th, 2001, when a Boeing 767 unexpectedly entered the downtown Manhattan skyline and headed for the twin towers of the World Trade Centre. At approximately 8:46 am ET American Airlines Flight 11, carrying eighty-one passengers and eleven crewmembers crashed into the upper floors of the North Tower. The sidewalks of New York city were filled with people staring up at the burning building in confusion and disbelief as major television and news networks began reporting the story. Eighteen minutes later, smoke continued to billow out of the burning hole in the giant building and a second airplane entered the scene and flew head on into the South Tower. Also en route from Boston to Los Angeles, Flight 175 had been carrying fifty-six passengers and nine crewmembers.

Hundreds of rescue workers arrived at the scene as people fled the burning buildings. Fire crews began their long ascent toward the upper floors of the building in the hopes of rescuing those near the explosion. Citizens beared witness as dozens of people trapped in the upper floors of the towers jumped or fell to their deaths. American President George W. Bush, who was visiting an elementary school in Sarasota Florida when he got the news, gave a brief address and declared the situation "an apparent terrorist attack". Immediately following Bush's address, reports came in that the Pentagon had also been struck. American Airlines Flight 77 bound for Washington from Los Angeles had apparently cut off radio contact shortly after takeoff from Dulles International Airport. Air traffic controllers then spotted the aircraft speeding towards

restricted airspace around the White House. Suddenly the pilot executed a tight pivot, and circled 270 degrees to approach the Pentagon from the Southwest before it tilted sideways, caught the ground with a wingtip, and carved a hole six storeys high in the national defence headquarters. The Boeing 757 had been carrying thirty-eight passengers and seven crewmembers. Television footage showed a gapping hole in the side of the Pentagon, and reporters stated that the Federal Aviation Administration had grounded air traffic nation-wide. New York was in lock down mode. Bridges and tunnels were sealed off, the stock exchange closed, and International flights in progress were instructed to land in Canada.

At approximately 9:50 am ET, shortly after the Pentagon was hit, all one hundred and ten storeys of the South Tower collapsed. A huge cloud of smoke and debris billowed into surrounding neighbourhoods. It was estimated that thousands of people may have been killed, many of them rescue workers making their way up the floors to evacuate remaining workers. Twenty minutes later news reports announced that United Airlines Flight 93 en route from Newark to San Francisco had crashed in a field Southeast of Pittsburgh. It too was a Boeing 757, and had been carrying fifty-eight passengers and six crewmembers. Then, at approximately 10:30 am ET the North Tower of the World Trade Centre imploded, causing even more devastation and blanketing downtown Manhattan in ash and debris.

As news reports replayed footage of the towers collapsing, the tallest skyscrapers in Chicago, Los Angeles, Boston, Cleveland, and Minneapolis were evacuated, as well as hundreds of government buildings around the country. Flights were grounded in Canada and Canadian and Mexican borders went on high alert. Military bases across the U.S.

were also alerted, and extra security was added at the U.S. Department of Energy's Nuclear Weapons and Research company in OakRidge, Tennessee. The entire Pacific coast in the United States was effectively sealed off. Stock exchanges, major businesses, the Mall of America, and the world's largest auto maker - General Motors Corporation in Detroit all shut down. The Grand Coulee Dam in central Washington State and the Hoover Dam on the Nevada/Arizona state line closed. Major movie studios, television production facilities, and theme parks were shut down, and for the first time since John Kennedy's assassination in 1963 Disney parks in Florida and California closed. Every museum and monument in Washington was shut down, and so too was Mount Rushmore in South Dakota, and the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia. All major baseball games were postponed for the first time since the death of Franklin Roosevelt in 1945. In essence, it appeared that an entire nation had come to a standstill. Literally and symbolically the terrorists had successfully targeted the heart and soul of America.

A personal reaction

It is unlikely that anyone old enough to watch the news on September 11th, 2001, will ever forget where they were that morning. I myself have a vivid recollection of where I was when I heard that a plane had crashed into one of the towers of the World Trade Centre. In the academic field of Cognitive Psychology this type of memory is sometimes referred to as a *flashbulb* memory. This analogy is derived from the art of photography, referring to the snapshot of a light-reflected image that becomes permanently ingrained on film. In the reality of everyday life, this memory is one of an emotionally laden event that becomes frozen in time and accessible to us years later. As

one of my clients said some months after September 11th, "It will be etched in my brain forever".

I was lying in bed listening to the news on my clock radio when I first heard that a plane had crashed into one of the World Trade Centre Towers. Details were sketchy, and more news was to follow. Still half asleep, I thought it sounded like a strange accident and wondered how an airplane could have gotten close enough to hit a building. At the end of the news came a brief updated report - another plane had hit the second tower. I remember questioning if I had heard right, and turned on the television.

Sure enough, both towers of the World Trade Centre were burning. I remember feeling an initial sense of confusion, as if what I was seeing was not real. When I realized that it was real and that these were not accidents but deliberate attacks involving actual commercial airliners, I felt shocked and frightened at the same time. Instead of preparing myself for the day, I remained transfixed by the images that saturated every television network.

As reports of subsequent attacks began pouring in, I had the eerie sensation that I was witnessing history. I thought about family members who had passed away, and wondered what their reaction would be if they were alive to see this. Maybe they had the answers to why it was happening at all. My hands flew to my face when the North Tower collapsed, and I watched in disbelief. I had just witnessed thousands of deaths. I wondered if I knew anyone in the towers. My mind strayed to family and to those who worked in government buildings. I chastised myself for feeling worried and rationalized that I lived in Canada, and that something like this would not happen here. Yet, as I

continued to watch I realized that it was quite unlikely that anyone in New York city believed that this could have happened to them.

As more tragic events unfolded, panic spread as did the realization that no one was immune. One television station reported a rumour that an unidentified plane was headed toward Toronto. Reports also came in that the Premier had concerns regarding Alberta's Oil and Gas industry being a possible target because it is was major supplier to the United States. My mind and heart slipped forward in time and my imagination took over. What was next? Could this happen here? I felt a sense of guilt because I was safe and thousands were currently suffering. Suddenly the world felt very small. Nothing would ever be the same. Everything I had to do seemed insignificant.

I do not recall exactly how long I watched television that Tuesday. I know that I watched until I absolutely had to leave to attend class. I felt embarrassed for what I felt must have been morbid curiosity on my part, to keep watching over and over the scenes of the planes crashing, and buildings collapsing. At school things felt different. The mood was sombre, and the hallways quieter. In class my colleagues and I felt the need to process some of what had happened. We were encouraged to talk and for this we were grateful. When I returned home that evening I felt the need to see what else had transpired. I once again watched the news, in almost the same stunned silence I had watched that morning.

In the days that followed, the attacks dominated every television network, newspaper, magazine, and conversation. It was strange to see newspapers with headlines such as "Attack on America", "America's new war", and "A day of Infamy". Entire newspapers were dedicated to coverage of the events. It seemed as if everything else was

now unimportant and was being pre-empted for talk on terrorism. In the days following the attacks the Globe and Mail was filled with first hand accounts of survivors from downtown office buildings, reporters who happened to be on the streets when the planes hit, and family members who were attempting to contact loved ones. Words previously reserved for atrocities overseas were printed all over newspapers. Words like *carnage, senseless slaughter, warzone* and *mayhem.* The attacks were compared to the attack on the Pearl Harbour naval base in 1941. North Americans were quoted saying that their sense of privilege, protection and isolation was forever destroyed. Osama Bin Laden, leader of a network of Islamic fundamentalist terror groups around the world, was identified as the most likely suspect for the attacks. President George W. Bush promised revenge. I felt unsettled at the immediate talk of retaliation, although for the first time ever I think I understood how important it could be.

The accounts that I found the most difficult to read were those of loved ones who received phone calls from family members aboard the hijacked airplanes. When I was younger I often thought about death, and what would be the most difficult way to lose someone. Would it be when the death was anticipated, and time rushed by as you grappled with all of the things you wanted to do and say? Would it be more painful not to have an opportunity to say goodbye at all and live with possible regret? I was given the unfortunate opportunity to witness these dilemmas first hand during both my teenage and early adult years. I had not however, ever been placed in a situation where I had a matter of seconds to connect for the final time with a loved one before their life was taken by someone else. What must this have been like? I hoped that I would never have to know.

As the weeks progressed rescue efforts turned into recovery efforts. I found myself preoccupied with enormous changes that were taking place in my life. I questioned previous decisions, current choices and situations, and what my future entailed. I also found myself questioning a long held desire to have children. Did I want to bring them into this world? Could I protect them when I myself felt such a lack of control? I felt a sense of hopelessness when I considered an empty future because of my fears. I was not used to being pessimistic. I felt uncertain, apprehensive, and above all else lonely.

Not used to feeling so overwhelmed, I tried to distract myself with my studies and work. I had difficulties sleeping and had disturbing dreams. I felt cut off from the rest of the world and alienated from myself. My mind oscillated between past and present, as if trying to slow things down. I knew that this enormous event had triggered something for me in a way I did not yet understand.

Searching for self

> *"Each life is a possible dialogue with the world, a possible series of responses to the invitations, questions, and commands that the world utters" (Jourard, 1971a, p. 93).*

Whitfield (1993) believes that almost every adult is in greater or lesser degree still struggling on the long journey to achieve selfhood on the basis of patterns which were set in early family experiences. Jourard (1971a) referred to much the same process but termed it "felt entrapment" – or the result of a social system that prides productivity and material wealth and alienates us from experiencing our own possibilities including the possibility of reinventing ourselves. Moustakas (1967a) agrees that often a person is known "in terms of what he represents and what he can do rather than who he is.

Evaluating a person from his products reveals a fragmented picture of where he has been but not who he is or where he is going" (p. 3).

Continuing along the familiar path of defining ourselves by what we do is often less intimidating than venturing into the unknown territory of self-exploration. Personal growth is often avoided because of the fear of discovering hidden weaknesses or inadequacies (Maslow, 1968). There are processes or defences that facilitate the evasion of personal growth at both individual and collective levels. Lifton (1967) referred to the need for an enemy to substitute for doubt and uncertainty. Having an enemy allows us to attribute our fear and frustration not to our limitations or short-comings but to someone else. Levine (1967) referred to "psychic closing off" as being related to the defence mechanism of denial and isolation as well as to a behavioural state of apathy. In the search for an enemy or psychic closing off, we are denied self-confrontation that has the potential to lead us to enhanced existential awareness (Yalom and Lieberman, 1991).

In the aftermath of September 11th, the search for an enemy was unrelenting. The invisible force that gripped the United States and the world was frightening for there was no one to hold accountable. The search for an enemy served in part as a preoccupation to avoid having to reflect on the wounds of a nation. The urge to psychically close off was fuelled by anxiety, an emotion that Rollo May (1953) referred to as the most painful human emotion. Anxiety indicates the presence of an unresolved conflict within us, just as a fever alerts us to an internal struggle in progress. Like a fever, the symptoms of anxiety include disorientation and confusion. As long as there is confusion there is an open possibility that we can become aware of the causes and search for solutions. Considering pain as opportunity and admitting to feelings of powerlessness enables

individuals to awaken from their present way of living (Whitfield, 1991). Rollo May (1953) saw a positive and hopeful side to anxiety because, "just as anxiety destroys our self-awareness, so awareness of ourselves can destroy anxiety." (p. 44).

Loneliness

> *"It is what we do in time and not time itself per se that helps us cope with major loss" (Harvey, 2000, p. 112)*

How does one begin this journey into self-awareness? Storr (1988) believes that it is necessary to remove oneself voluntarily from the tasks of life in order to contact inner depths of being which elude us in day to day living. Other people can chain us to our present identity by their method of relating and Storr believes that our true self only emerges when alone.

Experiences of being a self originate in relatedness to others (May, 1953), and when we are alone we are often afraid of losing what we believe is our sense of self. This sense of self has been referred to as both a False self (Whitfield, 1991, 1993) and a "conforming person" (Moustakas, 1990). The plethora of present communication technology allow us the luxury of being in the constant presence of others, and the misfortune of distancing us from ourselves. May (1953) stated that loneliness is "such an omnipotent and painful threat to many persons that they have little conception of the possible values of solitude and even are frightened at the prospect of being alone" (p. 26).

According to Jourard (1971a), "going away" is usually the first step in psychological growth: "Freedom from the experienced impact of others' physical presence is the first step in the fulfilment of freedom to grow. One usually needs to leave other people in order to take leave of the way one has chronically been with them" (p. 68). For many people being alone heightens feelings of loneliness and is thus anxiety

provoking. Symptoms of loneliness are similar to anxiety and include feelings of restlessness, tension, a need to search, discomfort and distress (Weiss, 1988).

The process in the present study mirrors the conditions that characterized Clark Moustakas's (1961) research on loneliness. While spending time with his young daughter who was gravely ill in hospital, Moustakas became aware of the intense feelings of loneliness experienced by many of the children on the ward. Speaking with the children and observing their interactions with the hospital staff generated questions surrounding their experience of loneliness. For Moustakas this grew into a search for self in solitude. Connecting with his own feelings of loneliness eventually led to expanding awarenesses. Moustakas (1967b) considers loneliness as "a capacity or source in man for new searching, awareness and inspiration" (p. 102). He believes that loneliness is a requirement for living and exists in its own right as a source of creativity, and insight. Loneliness has the power to draw upon untouched capacities and resources and expand awareness.

Meaning in grief

> *"If all of us would make an all out effort to contemplate our own death, and to help others familiarize themselves with these thoughts, perhaps there would be less destructiveness around us" (Kubler-Ross, 1969, p. 12).*

In his article on loss and trauma, Weiss (1988) identified three major kinds of losses: relationship loss (the loss of a relationship through death, divorce, or dissolution), loss of self-esteem (loss of roles either personal or professional), and loss by victimization (through violent acts or natural disasters). Upon reflection, it seems that the events of September 11th encompass all three major types of losses. Although far from being a natural disaster, the terrorist attacks were certainly acts of extreme violence that

resulted in the loss of thousands of lives, and left countless families without loved ones. For the thousands of people who worked in the World Trade Centre it also meant a loss of income, an abrupt end to a career, and for many the loss of an identity.

Weiss (1988) stated that the key to transforming losses into something positive "is the hard work of the mind and spirit to give our losses meaning, to learn and gain insights from them and to impart to others something positive based on the experience" (p. 3). For many people who lost loved ones to the tragedies of September 11th, transforming their loss into something positive is likely the biggest challenge they will face.

In his writing on death and death symbolism, Robert J. Lifton (1967) described the Hiroshima disaster as "a tragic turning point in man's psychological and historical experience". He wrote that "the event had much to teach us that is of considerable value in our struggles to cope with a world altered much more than we realize, and made infinitely more threatening by the existence of nuclear weapons". On September 11th society again had to cope with the daunting aftermath of a deliberate act of violence on a grand scale.

Writers have noted that people coping with trauma are often compelled to attach some meaning or purpose to the event they are coping with and have a persistent need to make sense of it (Chodoff, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989; Neimeyer, 2001; and Silver, Boon & Stones, 1983). People affected by the events of September 11th may not only be reacting to the tragedy that occurred that day, but to losses they have experienced in the past which generated the same emotions. Losses and the experience of missing someone do not go away. They often lurk around and at times "rise above the level of

consciousness in our daily lives, sometimes shaking us powerfully" (Harvey, 2000, p. 12).

A study carried out by Ragan and McGlashan (1986) on early bereavement indicated that individuals who had childhood bereavement showed greater difficulty achieving mature adult attachments and instead formed intense, unstable interpersonal relationships and complained of chronic feelings of emptiness and boredom. Other research has shown that those experiencing trauma report lowered self-esteem, increased feelings of vulnerability, lowered interpersonal trust, greater worry, and poorer health even years later (Lehman, Wortman & Williams, 1987; Gluhoski & Wortman, 1996; Noms & Kaniasty, 1999). Epidemiological studies suggest that people who have experienced a loss or trauma are at an increased risk for a range of psychiatric disorders relative to those who have not experienced any such loss (Kessler, Davis & Kendler, 1997, Turner & Lloyd, 1995). Considering all of these potential risk factors there appears to be merit to the desire to attach meaning to a loss. Jourard (1971a) stated that "there is growing reason to suspect that hope, purpose, meaning and direction in life produce and maintain wellness even in face of stress, whereas demoralization by the events and conditions of daily existence helps people become ill" (p. 75).

CHAPTER THREE:

Approach to the Inquiry

> *"No scientist ever had a first-hand experience of what it is to be a planet, or a molecule, or a geological state. However, every psychologist has experienced what it is to be a human being. Our life experiences give us an enormous head start in our search to understand the wellspring of human action" (Howard, 1986, p. 70).*

The Art and Science of the Humanistic Paradigm

A paradigm can be defined as "the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigation, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p 10.). According to Bugental (1967) there is an important contrast between the mechanomorphic and humanistic paradigms in psychology. The mechanomorphic psychologist identifies the basic laws of human behaviour and then builds abstract structures from which understandings of behaviours or events can be derived. The mechanomorphic prefers the reductive and abstract method over examining naturalistic human experience. "Rather than concerning himself with the relation of a person's pain to his feelings of having power in his own life, he prefers to study the influence of a painful punishment on bar pressing in the rat" (Bugental, 1967, p. 7).

The humanistic psychologist finds the mechanomorphic's restriction to the objective and abstract too limiting. Humanists accept the endless challenge of a subject matter which they know they will never be able to encompass completely. They discover their reward through an engagement with a meaningful portion of the immensity of the subject. The humanistic psychologist is concerned with "the individual, the exceptional, and the unpredicted rather than seeking only to study the regular, the universal and the

conforming" (Bugental, 1967, p. 9). In essence, the humanist believes that meaning is more important than method.

The distinctions that Bugental (1967) makes between mechanomorphic and humanistic paradigms in psychology are similar to those Royce (1967) draws between the "scientist" and the "artist". According to Royce, the artist accesses all cognitive structures, maximizing symbolic and intuitive processes and minimizing thinking and sensory ones. The scientist maximizes the rational and empirical methods at the expense of symbolizing and intuition. Psychology, as Royce interprets it to be, lies at the "crossroads" between the scientific and artistic cultures.

Peggy Papp (1987) is a family therapist who has written on the links between clinical and artistic creativity. She believes that the major goal of art, as of therapy, is to change a basic perception so that one "sees differently". Papp (1987) considers the beauty in the work of therapists and artists as being informed by "the excitement of discovering, connecting patterns, seeing an analogy never before seen, suddenly viewing disassociated elements in relation to one another and uniting those elements in a holistic picture through the use of symbols and metaphors" (p. 22). This view of psychology as a creative process is similar to the humanistic view that meaning and experience are more important than method.

In his work on the psychology of science, Maslow (1966) wrote that there is no substitute for experience. "All other paraphernalia of communication and knowledge – words, labels, concepts, symbols, theories, formulas, sciences – all are useful only because people already know them experientially" (pp. 45-46). In western society, individuals are born into a rational culture that utilises sensate processes as a primary way

of knowing. The value of symbol and intuition are often diminished. Joseph Royce takes the position that intuition and symbolism are legitimate ways of knowing in spite of the mystery surrounding how they work. According to Royce (1967), the key to the difference between scientific and humanistic psychology lies in the distinction between sign and symbol. "Humanities is concretely involved in life as opposed to making abstractions from the phenomena of life. Humanities speak through a symbolic rather than sign language" (p. 24). Royce (1967) believes that:

> The challenge for humanistic psychology lies in the attempt to tap these symbolic dimensions of reality by invoking the knowledge-giving tools of the humanistic trade, on the one hand, and by doing all that is possible to provide empirical tests for whatever is so revealed, on the other hand. But this must be done without the error of reductionism-that is, throwing out as invalid those humanistic insights which are not amenable or reducible to empirical confirmation. If the reductive error is committed, we will have reduced human psychology to a mechanic or scientific or empirical psychology. (p. 24)

Qualitative analysis

> *"Many scholars who call for a more humanistic approach to the scientific study of human beings have described the lopsided prevalence for quantitative over qualitative methodologies; causal analysis over understanding; objective techniques over more subjective approaches, laboratory over field studies; rigor over relevance; certainty over authenticity; and mathematization over meaning" (Howard, 1986, p. 120).*

The word qualitative implies an emphasis on meanings or processes that are not measured to determine quantity, intensity, or causal relationships. Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality and the intimate relationships between researchers and what they study. This type of research is not focussed on a reality that

can be studied, captured and understood, or what is otherwise known as positivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Instead, qualitative research embraces a type of postpositivism expressed by a reality "that can never be fully apprehended, only approximated" (Guba, 1990, p. 14).

The Heuristic research model

> *"Research psychologists might be among the groups least likely to have anything insightful to offer about feeling deeply and intensely active and alive. I wager that poets, novelists, dramatists, and other humanists possess far richer insights into these domains than do research psychologists" (Howard, 1986, p. 70)*

Qualitative Heuristics were developed at the University of Hamburg, Germany, in an attempt to revive qualities of systematic exploration and discovery in psychological and sociological research (Kleining & Witt, 2000). Qualitative heuristics represent a person-based, discovery process-oriented approach. It involves a process of internal searching that enables the researcher to discover the meaning and essence of human experience and develop methods for further investigation.

The heuristic process is a way of knowing that flows out of inner awareness, inspiration, and essentially valuing personal experience (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). Just as the self of the researcher is present throughout the process, the self is what appears to lie fundamentally at the heart of heuristics. Although the researcher begins to understand the phenomenon under study with increasing depth, the researcher also experiences growing self-awareness and self-knowledge (Moustakas, 1990). The growth of heuristics has been stimulated by the writings of various theorists and philosophers who have used other self-related concepts such as self-search, self-dialogue, and self-understanding to explain the nature of the process. The development of the heuristic approach was influenced in large part by Moustakas's (1961, 1969) investigation of

loneliness, Maslow's (1956, 1968) research on self-actualizing persons, Jourard's (1971a) writings on self-disclosure, Gendlin's (1962) analysis of meaning, and Polanyi's (1966) exploration of the tacit dimension.

Heuristic research is an endeavour which ultimately requires the creative depiction of experience. Heuristic researchers are therefore somewhat like the artists who are passionate and disciplined in the commitment to their work. Just as passion breathes life onto a canvas, so it brings energy, excitement, and movement into the research process. The researcher produces what is called a "bricolage", or "a complex, dense, reflective, collagelike creation that represents the researcher's images, understandings, and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 4). According to Dewey (1958), there is no work of art apart from human experience.

The root meaning of heuristics is derived from the Greek word "heuriskein", meaning to discover or find (Moustakas, 1990). Kleining and Witt (2000) describe four rules to optimise the chance for this discovery. The first rule states that the research person must be open to new concepts and should change his or her preconceptions if the data are not in agreement with them. The second rule emphasises that the topic of research is preliminary and may change during the research process. The third rule states that data should be collected under the paradigm of "maximum structural variation" of perspectives, and the fourth and final rule reminds the researcher that analysis is directed toward the discovery of similarities. The final rule is also encapsulated in Bronowski's (1965) description of heuristics as a science, or "a search for unity in hidden likeness" (p. 13). These four rules served as a guide during the present research process.

Six phases of heuristic research

Clark Moustakas is a researcher, educator, psychotherapist, and writer who represents a humanistic tradition of inquiry. He welcomes his involvement with those he is researching, and values subjective exploration of subject matter. According to Moustakas (1990) there are six phases that characterize heuristic research and each is made up of specific concepts. The six phases include: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative expression.

Initial Engagement

Initial engagement is the first phase of heuristic research. It occurs when the researcher first becomes aware that there is a particular issue or concern that he or she would like to understand more deeply. Clarification of the issue or concern involves a process of inner-searching where one engages in self-dialogue. Moustakas (1990) warns that the process is one that should not be hurried.

It was months before and after September 11th that I contemplated what I wanted to research for my thesis. I knew I wanted to begin researching something I felt personally connected to, and passionate about. Changes were taking place within me that I was not aware of at the time and that ended up influencing this research. I sensed that there were hardships pending in my own life and I knew I was experiencing something important, yet I could not identify what it was. I am grateful now that I did not succumb to the pressure to choose a topic as that time. After months of reflecting and self-searching the topic "came". It was worth the wait.

Immersion

Immersion is the second phase of heuristic research and involves an inner process of openness and receptivity. While immersed, the researcher lives the question whether awake or asleep and dreaming. The researcher enters fully into the life of the question and finds synchronous occurrences in people, places, meetings and nature. All offer possible understanding of the phenomena under study. Rogers (1968) compares the immersion process to that of a sponge soaking up all aspects of human experience. The immersion phase is exciting, tantalizing, and demanding. Moustakas (1990) warns that ambiguity and possible contradictions may tempt a researcher toward premature closure. Patience is again necessary in this phase.

Relative to this study the primary immersion included photography and written reflection. The reflections were not in the form of journal entries which I had originally planned, but were spontaneous self-reflections that were driven by the photographic images. The choice for photography as a primary tool was also based on its value in therapy and the world of research. Further developments on the use of photography follows in the fourth chapter.

Secondary immersions also existed in this study in the form of nature walks, personal knowledge and experience, exercises designed for self-exploration, and collecting and reading relevant material (including newspaper and magazine articles, as well as philosophical and psychological writing). During this phase there were times when I felt completely immersed in my own world, oblivious to what was happening around me.

The heuristic methods I used most extensively throughout this phase included indwelling and internal frame of referencing.

Indwelling

Indwelling is an essential process throughout the heuristic inquiry. It is a painstaking and deliberate process that involves turning inward to seek a deeper, more profound understanding of the meaning of experience. To understand something fully one must "dwell inside the subsidiary and focal factors to draw from them every possible nuance, texture, fact, and meaning…the process is conscious and deliberate, yet not lineal or logical" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 24).

Although often a painful undertaking, indwelling in the present study was ultimately rewarding. It took sustained attention to notice that I was avoiding experiencing a particular feeling or overlooking an interesting coincidence. Conscious effort was necessary to engage with these feelings and awakenings. Trust was also an important element in indwelling, as I needed to believe that meanings were worth searching for. Becoming attuned to fleeting awarenesses allowed me to engage in deeper meanings behind emotions such as anger and guilt. This conscious process of turning inward allowed me to access deeper layers of meaning, and truths that would not otherwise have been apparent.

Internal Frame of Reference

All knowledge, regardless of how it has been attained, relates back to an internal frame of reference. To know and understand the nature, meaning, and essence of any human experience, one depends on the internal frame of reference of the individual

themselves (Moustakas, 1990). As Jourard (1971a) stated, "each man's experience is a possible way for the world to be" (p. 93).

Significant awarenesses can be developed from internal searches, therefore it is imperative that researchers have a sense of self and trust their inner world. Age old questions surrounding "who am I" seem relevant to the present study. Assuming the search for a true self exists, one asks questions such as "How can I get in touch with this real self underlying all my surface behaviour? How can I become myself?" (Rogers, 1961, p 108). One of our reasons for being is to get to know ourselves in a richer, more profound way (Whitfield, 1991). When we know ourselves, we bring forward a greater awareness of our own experience. We can do this only if we are truly in relationship with self.

The internal frame of referencing was an important element of my process during this research. Revealing with honesty my personal process as I believed it to be took courage. The challenge was not to be a "stranger hiding behind a mask" (Rogers, 1961), or a "False self" (Whitfield, 1991). The stranger and the False self are likened to the "conforming person" who Moustakas says "does not use his own resources, his own experience, but takes direction from others. Somewhere he has given up his actual identity and submerged himself into acceptable group modes" (p. 37).

Incubation

Incubation is the third phase of heuristic research and it occurs when the researcher retreats from the intense focus to allow the unconscious to continue processing. Likened to "deliberate defocusing" (Snyder, 1988), this period of time has also been referred to as a time when the accumulated material simmers, or is

unconsciously scanned, compared, organized, or elaborated on (Storr, 1988). During this phase the researcher resumes everyday tasks, having faith and patience in intuitive processing.

Incubation relative to this study occurred during periods of time when I was just at the fringe of my awareness of the work in progress. Whether driving on the highway, relaxing next to an outdoor fountain, removing my gaze momentarily from a photograph, or suspended in that moment just before sleep takes over, I was periodically overcome with intuitions, tacit knowing, and realizations.

Intuition

Intuition bridges the gap between implicit knowledge or tacit knowing, and explicit knowledge – that which can be observed or described (Moustakas, 1990). It makes immediate knowledge possible without the intervening steps of logic and reasoning. Intuition has been compared to the analogy of "journeying from A to Z without stopping at any letters along the way" (DeBecker, 1997, p. 28). In the journey of heuristic research, one uses this inner sense to unconsciously draw inferences from subsidiary and observable factors. The inner workings of this type of "knowing without knowing why" remains a mystery.

Intuition is an essential characteristic in knowledge seeking. The intuitive capacity allows for the identification of patterns and relationships that are key to scientific endeavours. In essence, intuition leads a researcher to "discover patterns and meanings that will lead to enhanced meanings and deepened and extended knowledge" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 24).

Intuition played a key role in each phase of the present study. At various points throughout the process I recognized that certain awarenesses or actions had come about intuitively for me. I believe that the photographs that became the most meaningful for me were of images that intuitively spoke to me. I sense that by re-reading dreams I had recorded, my intuition picked up on new meanings. Throughout the six phases of the heuristic process, my intuition gave me pause, at times drawing me away from the research, then guiding me back when necessary.

Focussing

Focussing is a sustained process of systematically contacting the more central meanings of an experience (Moustakas, 1990). It involves the clearing of an inward space to enable one to tap into thoughts and feelings that are essential to clarifying a question. Eugene Gendlin (1981) who wrote about focussing as the next step after getting in touch with feelings, stated that focussing will let one "experience and recognize when actual change is happening internally and when it is not" (p. 7).

Douglass and Moustakas (1985) contend that focussing, or pausing long enough to examine internally, enables an individual to identify qualities of an experience that have previously gone unnoticed. When focussing, the individual accesses and connects feelings and cognitions, internal shifts occur, and new themes emerge.

As this study progressed I learned to use focussing to explore an internal world beneath anxieties, fears, and other powerful felt senses. Clearing an inward space was a welcomed experience that gave pause to an otherwise busy day. An example of focussing that took place during this study occurred when I examined my repeated urge to pair images in two separate photographs. Originally the objects in the photos were

labelled for what they represented: hope and loneliness. Through a process of indwelling I sensed some doubt at these labels and recognized that these feelings were secondary to deeper understandings. Focussing enabled me to connect with the questions that surrounded my doubt, and gave rise to an internal shift. I had initially separated the objects from their surroundings, and when I took the time to experience the full context of the images a new and joint theme emerged. Although hope and loneliness existed initially, the images ultimately awakened the powerful and primary feeling of abandonment.

Illumination

Illumination is the fourth phase of heuristic research and occurs when new awarenesses emerge from the incubation phase. This is a time when the creative person has new insight, or discovers a solution to a problem. Illumination leads to new qualities, themes, and synthesis. They emerge into consciousness quite naturally if one is open to tacit and intuitive knowing.

Relative to this study, instances of illumination occurred several times. There is one in particular that stands out:

> I had dozens of photographs spread out before me in no particular arrangement, and they lay there for hours as they had many days previous. It was not with conscious effort that my eyes strayed to one photo again and again and not particularly clear to me why I picked it up and stared at it for minutes on end. Then it hit me. This was the one. This was my final photograph. This was me.

Explication

The purpose of the fifth phase of heuristic research – explication, is to fully examine what has awakened in consciousness, in order to tease out and understand the many possible layers of meaning (Moustakas, 1990). In essence, explication involves putting what has "arrived" into words. In this phase I again used indwelling and focussing, as well as self-dialogue.

Self-Dialogue

Self-dialogue is a method of deliberate self-reflection. For myself it involved intimate internal conversations that were both grounding and stimulating. I found self-dialogue similar to what Attig (2001) terms "soul searching" for it facilitated a deeper understanding of where I was at mentally, emotionally and spiritually in my research.

Creative Synthesis

The final phase of heuristic research is known as creative synthesis. Once the researcher has developed a deep understanding of the phenomena under study the challenge becomes to pull everything together into a final form that does it justice. Creative synthesis gives meaning to the study and is usually done through a narrative description, poetry, story-telling, drawing or painting.

The creative synthesis phase of this study was a two part process involving an image and an echo. One photograph emerged as the final image and captured my personal journey in this process. The echo resonates from the image and reflects on the learnings I gained through the development of the themes.

Validity of Heuristic Research

> *"My view of private research acknowledges that every clinician is also a scientist. The clinician is an individual struggling to make sense of the world, the people in it, and that most intriguing topic, how and why people change" (Howard, 1986, p. 91)*

Moustakas (1967a) argues that in spite of all the advances in personality tests and measures for analyzing human behaviour "understanding the person from his own point of view, in the light of his own unique experience, desires and interests, is still the most real way of knowing" (p. 3). In heuristics, comprehensive knowledge derived from exhaustive self-search and creative depictions of experience equals truth (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). The question in heuristics is one of meaning and process over fact and goal. "Only the person can fully know what he sees, hears, and feels to be fundamentally true" (Moustakas, 1967a, p. 13).

Because heuristic research is a qualitative approach its validity cannot be measured quantitatively through statistics. Instead one considers "whether the ultimate depiction of experience accurately and vividly represents the meanings and essence of the experience" (Moustakas, 1990, p. 32).

CHAPTER FOUR

Painting with Light

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present photography first in the context of therapy, and then as a research tool. In the present study photography was experienced as a therapeutic activity that highlighted a personal inquiry. Because photography itself does not qualify as a therapy (Cosden & Reynolds, 1982), but rather as an activity that can be therapeutic, it is explored separately from phototherapy. Phototherapy is a combination of photography and psychotherapy and is applied in the context of a therapeutic relationship. Both are described because of their shared potential for facilitating growth and healing. The present chapter also explores the role that photography plays in research, and provides a rationale for its use in the present study.

Phototherapy

The root meaning of "photography" is derived from the Greek words "graphos" and "photos", meaning to write or paint with light. Photography has a history that dates back almost two centuries with the first documented photographic image taken by a French chemist in 1826 (Loellbach, 1982). Thirty years later an English physician by the name of Dr. Hugh Diamond pioneered the use of photography in psychiatry when he recognized the therapeutic value in showing his patients photographs of themselves (Phillips, 1986). Although initially used for record keeping purposes, Diamond believed that the photographs encouraged "self-confrontation" in his patients, enabling them to have a more realistic view of themselves (Phillips, 1986).

The synthesis of the two disciplines of photography and psychotherapy became known in the mid 1900's as "phototherapy". In phototherapy photographs are considered powerful sources of information which can act as catalysts or metaphors for clients' concerns (Krauss, 1980). When used under the guidance of a trained therapist, photographic material can reduce or relieve painful psychological symptoms, and facilitate psychological growth and therapeutic change (Stewart, 1979). According to Loellbach (1982) psychiatry, psychology and counselling are beginning to recognize photography as a treatment modality rich with possibilities for increasing insight, awareness and mastery over dysfunctional behaviour and affect in a diversity of clients.

Photography is a skill that utilizes both sides of the brain (Stewart, 1979) and when combined with therapy it can benefit an individual in a variety of ways. Loellbach (1982) cites four reasons for using phototherapy. First, the photograph serves as a test of reality by providing visual evidence which the therapist and client can use to discern what is real and what is not. Second, phototherapy is a means for individuals to confront themselves. It offers an opportunity to distinguish between projective, objective and subjective sense of self, others and environment. Third, the therapist receives global and predictive perspective of clients, and fourth, clients receive a sense of mastery, self-esteem and develop their skill and potential.

Photographs can serve as a means, a process, or a way in. Weiser (1990) believed that one can read between the lines of a photograph as if it were a diary. As a diary or personal form of communication the photograph is neither right or wrong and therefore cannot be judged. This serves to validate an individual's experience. The photograph invites others to see the person for what they are, and when this happens and they are still

accepted, they can feel good about themselves. According to Hattersley (1971), "photography increases your feelings of substance and completeness, and affirms that you are capable of handling difficult matters even if your feelings about yourself aren't as good as they should be" (p. 22).

Photography also encourages people to become more aware of things outside of themselves and to relate to others. It also stimulates the imagination, teaches people how to see better, and develops a more critical view of reality. There are also benefits to phototherapy that go beyond the photograph itself. The process involved in taking a photograph and learning how to develop it can help individuals improve social interaction skills, develop self-esteem and accept praise and constructive criticism (Cosden & Reynolds, 1982). Photography also promotes the development of insight into human behaviour. Watching others interact and trying to capture their image on film can increase the accuracy of prediction. Some people also feel that there is a spiritual component to photography because images emphasize the visual kinship or relatedness of things (Hattersley, 1971).

Approaches to phototherapy

The use of family photographs is common in phototherapy. Utilizing "family memorabilia" (Sedgwick, 1980) can encourage individuals to discover resources in their family, clarify sources of problems (such as communication), investigate aspects of personality in interpersonal communication, and possibly even clarify relationship dynamics. Early childhood experiences may also be depicted in photographs as well as relatives that the individual may otherwise be unable to recall. The photographic image is a way of preserving moments of time.

Virtually any type of photograph can be therapeutically useful. Clients who take a photo of themselves have a different vantage point from clients who have someone else take their photo. Both approaches encourage them to encounter their unique expressions and appearance. Images of objects, events, or environments taken by clients can reflect what they value, what their interests are, and what concerns they may have (Stewart, 1979). Therapists can gain valuable information by considering the choices that clients make in terms of which photographs they bring into a session. The depth of a client's exploration as well as the occasion and environment of images are also meaningful (Krauss, 1980). The therapist can take into consideration the speed, rhythm, and order in which the images are presented.

Phototherapy and trauma

Children who are abused typically internalize the blame for what has happened to them, and distance their mind from their body in order to survive. Harboring painful secrets throughout their lives, these children develop into adults who report feeling unalive, unreal, and incapable of spontaneous feeling (Whitfield, 1990). Invalidated, they feel incapable of trusting their intense feelings and fear vulnerability. Powerful emotions block the adult from being a freely expressive self respecting-individual. The adult survivor lives with undeserved confusion, shame, and guilt.

Phototherapy facilitates a healing process by stimulating the feelings that accompanied childhood trauma and by reawakening lost facts. According to Weiser (1990), adults see emotionally laden memories from the vantage point of the age at which they were encoded. Photos which have been kept over time tend to have intense emotional meaning, and viewing them can allow a person to take the cognitive leap to

being there at the moment they were taken (Weiser, 1990). Photographs provide a record of what was actually in front of a camera at the time and can bridge the years between childhood and adulthood. In phototherapy therapists reconnect individuals with their inner child and helps earlier memories to be processed with the intellect and perspective of the adult who gains new understandings. The literature on phototherapy also suggests that photographs can show strengths and interests that the client has utilized in the past which may be blocked from awareness in the present due to stress (Krauss, 1980).

Photography as a research tool

When photography made its introduction into the world of social science research it was in the form of an observational tool in anthropological and ethnographical studies. Contemporary critics felt that these representations of culture said more about the ethnographer than those being observed. It was not until Worth's study of the Navajo that photographic representation of the self (also known as auto-photography) entered the field of study (Worth, 1981). By turning the camera over to his subjects Worth empowered them to produce images of their world exposed to their methods of interacting. Worth's work established photography as a discourse between the photographer, the subject, and the viewer or researcher.

The bulk of social science research that used photography as a tool took place in the 1970's and 1980's with marginalized groups of individuals. These groups included deaf children (Bodner, 1975), delinquents (Fryrear-Nuell, 1977), the elderly (Okura, Ziller, and Osawa, 1986), and mobility impaired and homeless children (Aitken & Wingate, 1993). The use of photography has been otherwise limited in conventional applications in the social sciences. Conventional researchers often believe in a single

reality that can be studied, and find the camera a troubling source of potential bias in connecting to that reality (English, 1988). Because qualitative research is not focussed on a single reality that can be studied, captured and understood, it is not interested in conventional applications or methods. Qualitative research, specifically heuristics, stresses the socially constructed nature of reality. Because the self is at the heart of heuristics, self-directed photography seemed a fitting medium for the present study.

Images as self

> *"The lens points in both directions. I have come to realize that I like things with a strong sense of foreground and background; that every roll I take tells a story; that life comes in shades and there is always light in darkness; that patience is an invitation for a photograph to reveal itself; and that the unconscious has a sense of humor" (Jevne, 2000).*

The image of a lens pointing in both directions is a powerful description of the camera's potential to reveal parts of people to themselves and to others. A two way lens fosters an intimacy between the viewer and that which is being observed. The phenomenological view of photography holds that the person behind the camera is visible in the photograph taken by themselves not of themselves (Ziller, 1990). As an art, photography mediates between the world and the viewer. "The difference between most other art forms and photography is between making something new on the one hand and clarifying what was already there on the other. The photograph does not ordinarily extend vision, it restores it" (Lindley, 1979, p. 16).

Duane Michals is a well known photographer who described photography as an unconscious self-reflective activity, or a journey into wounds that can only be approximated in pictures (Phillips, 1986). Carl Jung (1971) also believed in the

advantages of bringing up the personal unconscious. He thought that if people could bear seeing and knowing their shadow, part of their problem would be solved.

Images as conversation

> *"Echoes from the past are logical. Echoes from the unknown are understandably mystical. The future, however can also call us. You can go forward in time through a photograph. From there the future echoes into your present" (Jevne, 2000, p. 23).*

Almost every image has an echo (Jevne, 2000). Photographs have the power to transcend time by awakening elusive dreams and memories from years past. Images also have the ability to carry people forward in time to new experiences and new places that they may wish to re-visit.

At times a photograph can serve as a powerful catalyst for an emotional reaction, as experienced in the present study. Emotions are called forth at each point of involvement with an image, from the moment it is first seen, to the moment it is captured on film and then later viewed. VanVliet (1977) stated that, "stopping to respond to something the eye encounters offers reward enough in the simple acknowledgement of the involvement. The added effort in trying to capture the image in a photograph allows for an extension of the joy in later re-viewing and in the synergistic effect of sharing the joy with others" (p. 91). Jett Sarachek, an art therapist and photographer remarked that with photography one does not immediately resolve an issue by taking a picture of the problem. Instead she said, "I find myself drawn to or intrigued by a particular subject matter which I will eventually photograph. It is only much later when I study a body of work that I can absorb it and make a statement about how the work relates to my life" (Moon, 2002, p. 200).

Images of 9/11

Bill Biggart was a freelance photographer who was killed after entering the World Trade Centre, camera in hand, when everyone was evacuating. His last photograph was marked 10:28 am, the time of the first tower's collapse. Biggart's camera and photographs became part of a collection titled, "Bearing Witness" at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington. Curator Kathleen Kendrick hoped to create an intensely personal approach in the exhibit stating, "we normally look at an event's causality, its consequences and how it fits into the big picture of history. With 9/11 we don't yet have the distance" (US news, 2002). Michelle Delaney, the photography collection curator described disturbing pictures in her portfolio including images of bodies falling from the towers. The museum initially considered the images too much for the public to take, but a survey of visitors revealed that they wanted exposure to such emotionally charged articles (US news, 2002).

This request for exposure became a common if not implicit refrain following 9/11 as museums featured exhibits dedicated to capturing the trauma and hope at ground zero, art galleries displayed raw works in reaction to the events, and television networks aired emotionally laden personal accounts of victims. The Canadian Broadcasting System and Nextel broadcast a special titled "9/11", featuring the events of that day captured by two young filmmakers visiting Engine Seven, Ladder One, one of the first to respond to the chaos in downtown Manhattan. The film captured the horror on the faces of onlookers, and the raw emotion of everyone involved. Other specials followed including one titled "9/11: The long road home", presented by the National Broadcasting System nearly nine months later. It featured three people from different walks of life, and chronicled their

journey of recovery following September 11th. Web sites also sprung forth featuring photographs of ground zero and memorial services, and asking questions such as "Where were you on September 11th?" and "How has 9/11 changed your life?". There was a hunger for images of all kinds following 9/11, and it seemed they played an important role in the grief process of all involved. Lonnie Bunch, president of the Chicago Historical society said that "through artistic expression and thoughtful participatory public forums, we can bring a greater sense of healing and hope to our diverse community" (Suntimes, 2002).

Art of various forms became paramount in the healing that took place across North America. In an article on the art of healing following 9/11 Marianne Szegedy-Maszak (2002) stated that, "art serves many purposes, but after September 11th, none was more crucial than its therapeutic value for children". In fact art had a therapeutic value for people of all ages because it prompted them to tell more than they would if they had just talked, and helped them to gain deeper understandings of their own emotions. According to Shaun McNiff, president of the American Art Therapy Association, art as healing happened everywhere and happened spontaneously following 9/11 (Szegedy-Maszak, 2002). "Creating artwork may restore equilibrium in the psyche after the experience of loss by replacing the lost person or object. Through their creations, artists convert passive grief and helplessness into active mastery" (Spencer, 1997, p. 18).

Hattersley (1971) considered photography a healing task, one that promoted emotional well-being. She equated emotional well-being with feelings of worth, self-expression and beauty. She believed that in order to feel worthwhile individuals need to create meaning in their lives and, "because photos are mirrors of life, truths learned in

mirrors are truths about life" (p. 24). Photographs encourage people to see meaning in things, and the mere process of taking a photograph gives it meaning. Hattersley (1971) also felt that to be whole and healthy people needed to express themselves. Photography is an almost infinitely expressive medium that makes this possible. In addition to the needs for meaning and self-expression VanVliet (1977) felt that humans have a need for beauty. He believed that learning to create beauty and understand it deeply satisfies the soul and makes a life worth living.

Photography is an art, and art's power to evoke emotion reveals its healing properties. "Bringing forth our images and trusting that the process will allow us to transcend the mundane, visually connects us with our inner core, a place of wholeness that remains intact" (Spencer, 1997, p. 22). Furthermore, the content or quality of the photograph is secondary to the feelings and insights obtained through the processes of self-exploration or through visual observation.

Beyond words: images in reflective practice

My hope with the present study is to contribute to the literature on reflective practice and to advocate self-reflection as an integral component of professional development. Photography was an avenue through which my personal and professional selves could connect and communicate. The images were mirrors that reflected my needs and fears, and shed light into the valley that joined my personal and professional worlds.

Ronna Jevne (2002), a pioneer in the use of photography in reflective practice, stated that photographic images can invite counsellors to notice and explore their own issues. "People are hungering for something that professional training and development are neglecting. It appears, however, that the worlds of personal and professional

development, for the most part, remain discrete. Seldom is there a conscious effort to link the two domains. Photography is a potential activity and metaphor for doing so" (Jevne, 2002, p. 2).

Moon (1995) felt that the use of metaphor was essential to the healing power of the therapist. "Using graphic metaphors challenges people to describe the meaning of the psychological journey. Metaphor guides the seeker to explore themselves, to create their own solutions, and to give life meaning" (Moon, 1995, p. 13). The search for meaning in nature was a common thread in the themes in this study. In fact, metaphor is often considered "the logic of nature" (Combs & Freedman, 1990), making this study a powerful one.

CHAPTER FIVE

Living the questions

Self-preparation

Although I have owned a camera for many years, when I began this research process it was as though I had picked it up for the first time. Going for a nature walk with the intent of taking an entire roll of film was something I had never done before. I was initially scared that I would not be able to find what I wanted to photograph and that the end product would be unsuccessful.

The first day I made a decision not to search for anything, but to simply walk and take pictures of whatever caught my eye. So I walked, and I paused, and walked some more, not always aware of why I was taking any particular photograph. I was surprised to discover just how liberating it was to walk without aim and to take photographs without purpose. I realized that it was not about finding images but allowing images to draw me to them.

It took practice to squelch a critical voice in my head that wanted to have some control over the process. Trust developed over time and I allowed myself to stop mid step on the sidewalk to photograph a puddle, or slide down a snow bank to approach a barren branch that was asking to be seen. I relinquished my self-consciousness, and one afternoon found myself running back inside to grab my camera to photograph a garbage bin. My camera soon became an extension of myself, or a medium through which I could converse with the world around me.

The process

I recall my apprehension as my initial images were being developed. I wondered if I would be able to relive any of what I had experienced during the process. The final images were rewarding, and it was then that I realized that the process was not over. In many ways it was just beginning. At times the photos took me back to the moment and I experienced the same sensation. At other times the image took me by surprise as if it had taken itself – harnessing an energy that I had not sensed. My experience of the photographs also changed over time as I changed. This was part of the beauty of the process.

It is difficult to describe my experience of having these images around me in the months leading up to my creative synthesis. Major changes took place in my life in the months following September 11th including the breakdown of my marriage. Sitting and looking at the photos I had accumulated proved to be amazingly therapeutic, at times disturbing, and often comforting. There were periods of time when the photos would remain tucked away. Sometimes I took out one or two in particular, and other times I laid them all out around me where they sat for days.

The final groupings and themes for the photographs I have chosen to include in this chapter took a long time to emerge. In retrospect I believe that the photographs were speaking to me in the difficult months following 9/11, and I think that I needed to take the time to listen. I learned to trust myself and the process. There were long periods of "Immersion", and trusting is what made "Illuminations" possible.

Themes in nature

> *"When doubt and uncertainty overwhelm a person, then the individual may contemplate life from the depths of his own self and in nature" (Moustakas, 1967a, p.102).*

The majority of the images that offered themselves up occurred in nature. Trees, leaves, water, ice, and snow make up most of my collection. There are also photos of objects, some outdoor, some in. No photographs were ever contrived, planned, or posed. The photos reflect a journey that spanned a period of time from August 2001 to May 2002. (A few images were taken prior to September 11th and are included because they too captured part of my process and are integral to the themes).

The photographs were grouped thematically, and for the purpose of this study three images were selected per theme for a total of thirty. The thirty images were chosen for their power to generate written reflection. When combined with writing, Lindley (1979) believed that the projective aspects of an image are highlighted. Because the images I chose for the themes may not be as evocative for the reader as they were for me, I chose to include additional images from the two hundred I had collected. A sample of images that precedes each section will hopefully provide the reader with an opportunity to connect in their own way with each theme.

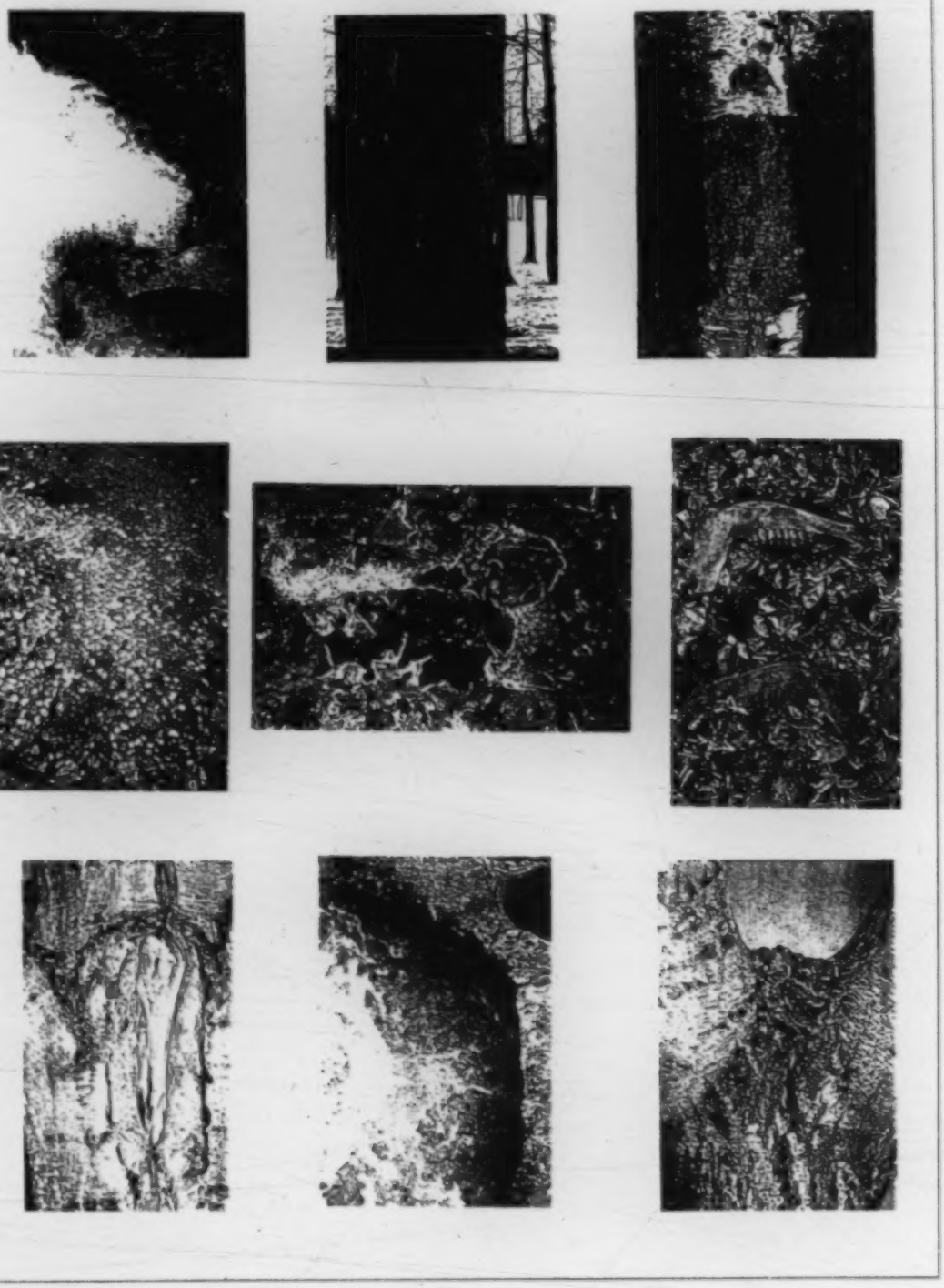
I reflected on each of the thirty images I chose at three levels. The first was in direct relation to the events of September 11th, and is titled simply "9/11". It is a reflection on specific incidents or news stories that took place in the aftermath of 9/11. The voice is not always mine, and is sometimes passive. The second level is a personal reflection generated by my own experience of 9/11 and similar synchronous events in my life. This response is the one most closely linked to the image and is a gut level,

spontaneous reflection titled "Self". It often takes the form of a poetic reflection, which VanVliet (1977) felt strengthened the pathways to feelings and memories. The "Self" voice shifts from first person singular, to first person plural. Mindful of Kahlil Gibran's (1926) quote "…should you open your ears and listen you would hear your voice in all voices" (p. 26), I am aware that some of these voices may become the reader's. The third level of reflection is my reaction to the theme from the point of view of a developing practitioner and is titled "The novice therapist". This response contains "I" statements, little reminders of what I need be mindful of as I venture into the helping field. All three levels of reflection include feelings, thoughts and observations. Some responses are in the form of questions, others are statements or commentary. No strict format was adhered to in order to push aside structured tasks and make way for spontaneous reflection.

The ten themes that offered themselves up during this study included: *Wounding, Grieving, Remembering Childhood, Retreating, Struggling, Searching, Noticing, Choosing, Coming Home, and Accepting. Wounding* was chosen as the first theme because it was the antecedent to healing. *Coming home* and *Accepting* were placed last because they gave closure to the process. Although the themes are presented sequentially, there was a recursive nature to the elements within them. A brief introduction will precede each of the themes.

September 11th raised numerous important questions in the political, cultural, and spiritual arenas. It was impossible for me to reflect on all of the important issues and points of view surrounding the events of September 11th. These images and reflections capture only a fraction of the concerns and perspectives of those affected.

Theme I: Wounding



Wounding

"Wounding" was the first theme that offered itself up after September 11th and was important throughout the process. The physical devastation and emotional turmoil that surrounded the events of that day left their mark on a city and millions of people around the globe.

On my personal journey of discovery wounds suddenly became apparent in nature. Trees in particular called out to me in the months following 9/11. There was a beauty and sadness expressed on their bodies that I had not previously noticed.

The following three images are some of nature's wounds. They were selected for the particular way in which they suggest the turmoil, violence, and pain that can accompany wounding.

9/11

I wonder what it was like,
that moment when you knew
you were going to die.
When you sat perched at the
edge of being, and fear shifted
to acceptance.
Was it a subtle movement,
or an instant change?

I wonder what it was it like,
to draw your last breath.
To remember loved ones
you were leaving behind.
Did precious moments flash
before you?

I wonder what it was like to
give your life.
Why you? Are you at peace?
I wonder.

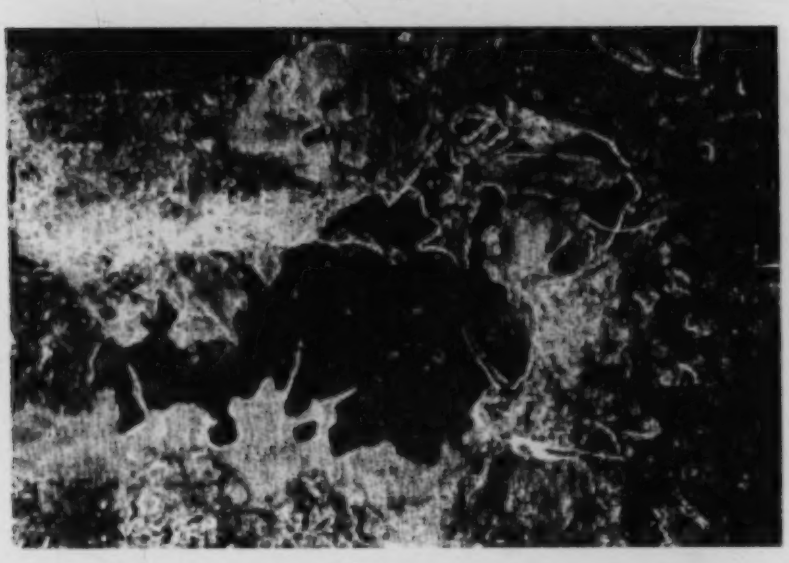
Self

Hard, carved out earth. Cold edges
cut through rock like metal through bone.
White froth, white rock. Dust.
Spraying. Falling.
Real. Crushed. Harsh and fast.
Left a hole and buried whole.
Wind swept, sea swept. Out.
Blue and white washing out red.
Unrelenting. Flying yet falling.
Hold still. Can't look. Hold on.
Earth, water, barriers lost.
Flushed out.

The Novice Therapist

I need to remember that sometimes people need to reflect and experience in direct spontaneity. That being in the moment can be critical to being real.

Wounding: I.II



9/11

"A hole in the earth" is how the crash site was described.
A huge gaping wound in a previously unblemished field.
Nothing left of what had been a giant aircraft.
No recognizable traces of a plane or anyone on board.

A news reporter said that only eight percent of human remains were recovered.
What does this mean? How can you fraction a human life?
I don't want to know.

Self

Fragile and suspended among the rock.
Edges cut and bleed light into the soul.
Inviting pools of darkness to dance.

The Novice Therapist

I must remember that fear accompanies change.
That wounds that are not visible are as painful as those that are.
That asking you to re-tell your story is asking you to hurt.

I must remember that moments can be relieved in a heartbeat.
That losses easily multiply.

Wounding I.III

9/11

A television is turned on.
Shock at the sight of an airplane
bearing down on the towers.
Horror at witnessing the impact.
Sudden panic remembering that
your loved one is in mid flight.

A phone rings.
"I love you sweetheart".
And the line is dead.

Night comes.
Sleep never does.
A part of you has been torn
away.

Self

A wound began the instant I entered the room and saw their tear streaked faces.
It deepened when I learned the horrible news,
and bled when I realized you had died.

The wound re-opened when I was told I was not loved. It stung when I heard that perhaps I never was. It ached when the thing inside that was struggling to survive began to die.

Looking closely at this wound I see that it has not healed. It is harsh and ugly. I want to turn away and let it heal itself. I do not want to learn how to treat it or take the time to mend it.
I don't feel I have the courage to touch it.

The Novice Therapist

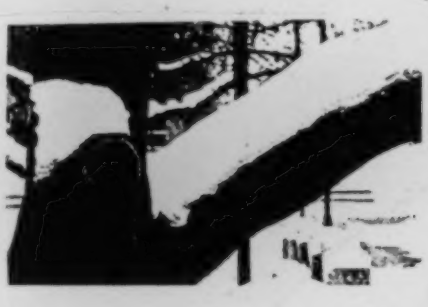
I need to get to know the wounded parts of myself and become aware of what triggers old pain.

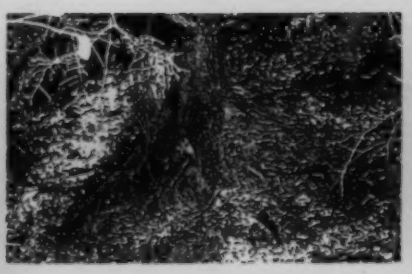
I need to have a sense of which wounds have healed enough to not infect or become infected.

I need to take the time to notice fresh cuts, find the energy to tend to injured parts, and summon up courage to examine old scars.

If I do these I will be a healthier helper.

Theme II: Grieving





Grieving

Grieving was a natural process following the deep wounding of 9/11. The grief was both personal and collective. Children, families, and communities all grieved in their own way.

Being in nature allowed me to connect with my own sense of loss. The seasons became powerful metaphors for grief during this journey. They reflected the cycle of life, the passage of time, and the hope for new growth. The images chosen for this theme represent a grief reaction, empathy, and mourning.

Grieving I.I

9/11

September 11th occurred just as the season was about to change.
Temperatures dropped, and light faded. There was a hollow quality to the fall air that made voices echo as they do in dreams.
Only this was not a dream.
A sudden rustling of leaves tossed by the cool fall air expressed the anguish of a loved one left behind. The anguish turned to sorrow as water turned to ice, and the first heavy snowfall signalled the onset of heartache.

Self

Regret weighs heavily upon a family's shoulders
and a blanket of silence muffles the memory
of a final moment shared.
Lives become frozen in time
as apathy numbs the pain that remains.
Only a new season
can bring the promise of renewal
and the celebration of a memory
that will melt away some grief.

The Novice Therapist

I need to remember that a metaphor can be a powerful way of expressing what cannot otherwise be articulated.
Symbols can reveal more than words can say.

9/11

Ground zero was a site of incredible devastation. Ramps and roadways were built to get at and around retaining walls and concrete structures where the towers once stood. In one section of the wreckage fourteen floors of a tower had collapsed into a compacted space eight feet high.

Four months into the clean up over one million tons of debris had been cleared away, and thousands more remained. At that time a news story reported people lining up for tickets to visit ground zero. Onlookers were given thirty minutes to peer into the massive hole in the earth where the towers once stood, and where human remains continued to be unearthed.

Was this morbid? Was this wrong? Or was it simply a way to grieve collectively?

Self

We isolate those who are hurting,
Abandoning their wounds
Because we are fearful.
We welcome them
when we admit our fears
and journey with them
in their pain.

The Novice Therapist

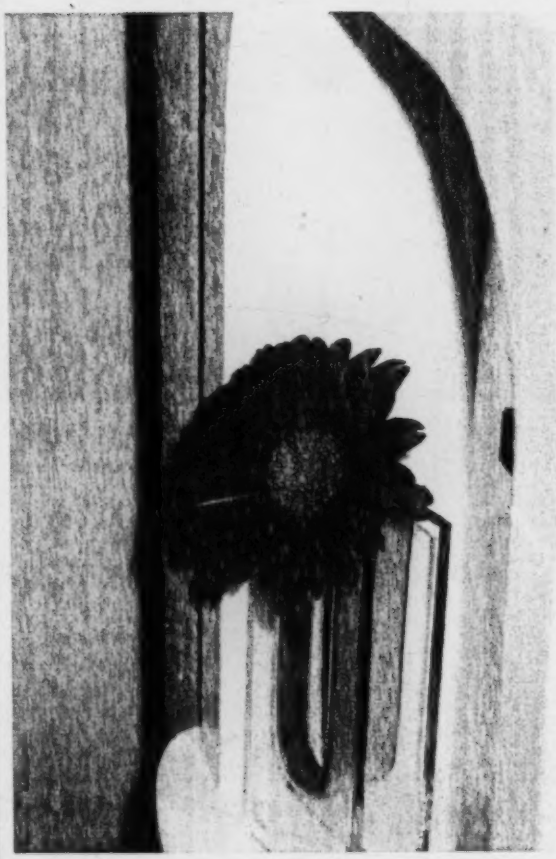
I will support you if you let me, and get close without touching you.
I will shield you to make it safe to expose your wounds,
and stand by you as you heal.

9/11

We are proud to honor the heroes of 9/11. The firefighters who selflessly gave their lives while trying to save others.
The passengers aboard flight 93 who bravely stormed the cockpit, and struggled to avert disaster.
The hundreds of paramedics, rescue workers, and civilians who assisted in the aftermath.

What about the lesser known, like the man who worked alone in the lobby of the Trade Centre? The one people passed on their way to work and acknowledged with a nod? The one whose name was added to list of those who died nearly one year later after someone mentioned, "What about that guy…the shoe shiner. I think I saw him that day."

Who will light a candle for this man at church or place a flower beside his picture during a memorial?
His too was a life lost.
Maybe not a hero, but more than just a number.



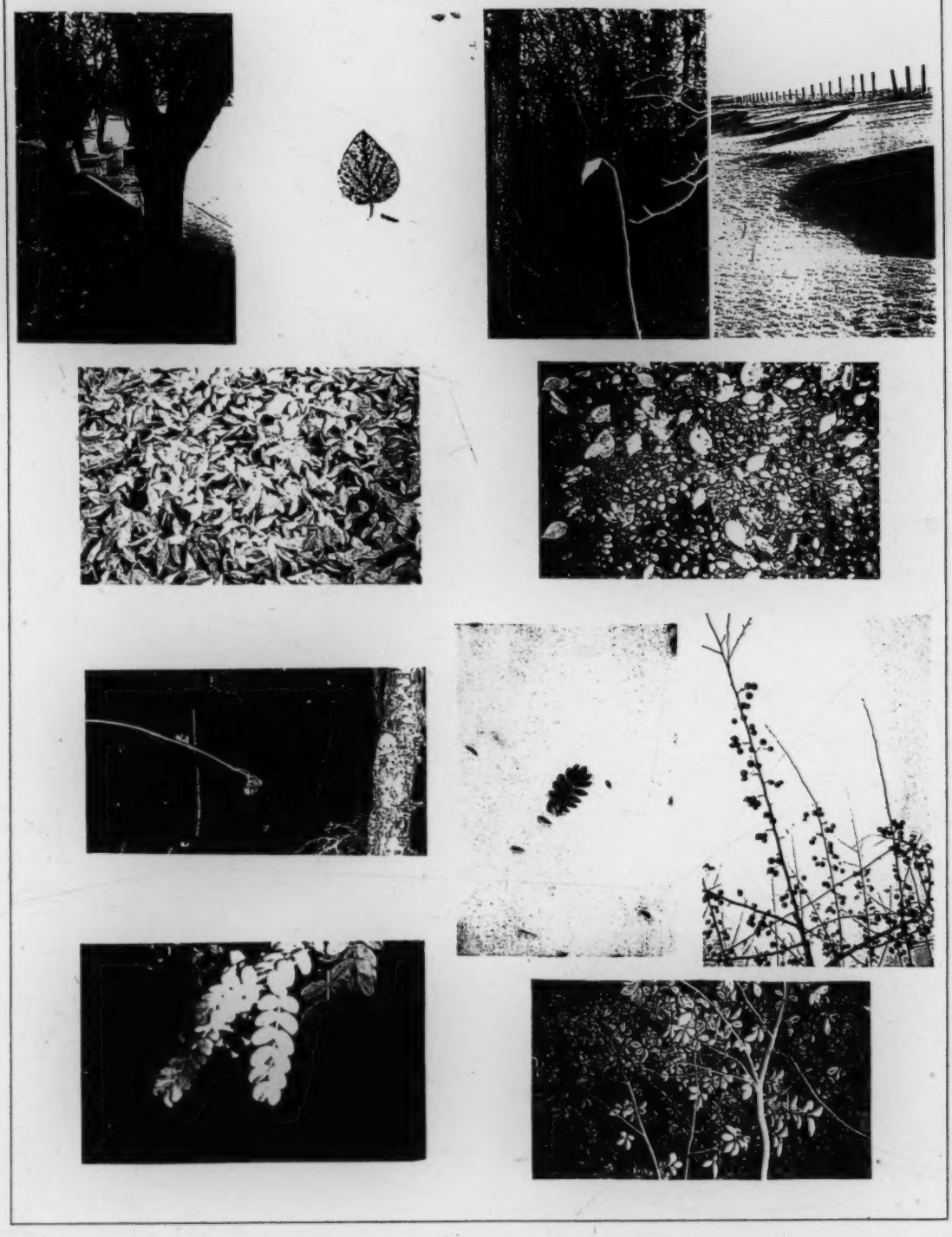
Self

Remembering renders permanent
what was once temporary.

The Novice Therapist

I wish I knew just the thing to say to you when you are in pain.
I wonder if I will.
I wish I could make you feel important and worthwhile.
I wonder if I can.

Theme III: Retreating



Retreating

Post September 11th a wounded nation declared that together they would survive, and together they would conquer. The media strengthened this message by focussing on a return to family values, and the importance of community. This was difficult for many to conceive when they began to fear their neighbours, subsequent terror attacks, and threats of anthrax. With increased anxiety came many unanswered questions. Instead of feeling comforted by family and community some felt isolated. Crowds of people gathered at ground zero and at memorial services made it impossible to be alone, but not impossible to feel lonely.

A number of lonely images offered themselves up in nature over the course of this research. The following images were selected for the intimate and lonely feelings that they conjured up in me.

9/11

She used to think how lucky she was to have found someone. Someone who understood her, who laughed at the same jokes, and shared the same dreams. That was before September 11th arrived and took the life of her someone. Now all she can think about is the emptiness.

It's the little things that she misses the most.
No knowing glances in a crowd of people, no inside jokes or favorite places.
No blankets to hog, kisses to steal, or notes to leave.
Just a feeling of emptiness.
And memories of the little things that now seem so big.

Self

Loneliness exposes me to myself.
I don't know if I like what I see.

The Novice Therapist

I need to keep in touch with moments of loneliness in my own life so I can better recognize and appreciate the anxiety that festers beneath your surface.

I need to be careful not to react to your panic,
so that I can guide without rescuing you.

Retreating III.II

9/11

9/11 left in it's wake intense feelings of vulnerability. Fear and suspicion overwhelmed citizens who no longer knew who they could trust. The possibility of war and additional attacks contributed to widespread anxiety, making the world feel smaller than it ever had before.

Self

I want to hide
in the shadows
but you notice me.
Under your intense gaze
I wait.
Unsure if you are safe.

The Novice Therapist

I will try to feel a little of what you feel
so that I might recognize when fear is making you vulnerable.

I will try to create a safe place for you to be before inviting you in,
and respect the pace at which you enter.

Retreating III.III

9/11

Many people took risks on 9/11 including the flight attendant who had the presence of mind to call in hijacking information and the man who stayed behind to ensure that his co-workers were all safely on their way out of the building.
In the months following 9/11 there were risks of different kinds.
People bravely reached out to one another, asked for help, support and love.
Risking intense emotions and the pain that accompanied telling their stories they showed great courage.

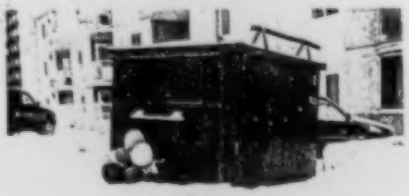
Self

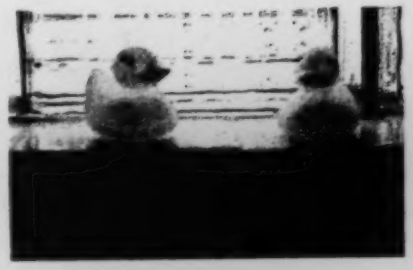
It is such an instinct to run from the despair, unease and restlessness that accompany loneliness. Staying with the uncomfortable emotions that arise takes so much courage. I risk coming in contact with those parts of me that I do not like. The parts that I have denied for so long.
I continue to have the urge to run from the loneliness or to fight against it. Sometimes the immediate pay off is worth the running and the fighting. The bad feelings return quickly though, and the peace never lasts for long.
Surrendering to the loneliness brings longer periods of clarity.
If only I can be brave enough to give in more often.

The Novice Therapist

I ask you to take so many risks. I have to be willing to take risks of my own.
I have to risk being honest with myself
by acknowledging my weaknesses and limitations.
I have to risk admitting to mistakes and asking for help when I need it.

Theme IV: Remembering Childhood





Remembering Childhood

Although the fear of abandonment is typically attributed to children, it is a fear that many adults are familiar with. In the loneliness that accompanies grief adults often connect with very vulnerable emotions, including fear. As mentioned previously, past trauma makes people susceptible to additional loss. Unresolved hurts likely surfaced for many during the intense anxiety manifested by 9/11. This anxiety combined with a heightened awareness of danger likely left people fearful of losing those they love.

Of the few indoor photographs collected for this study many were of childlike images. The months following 9/11 found me revisiting old toys and photographing childlike objects. Other photos, such as the ones shown here, stirred up powerful emotions for me. These photos are among my favorites for the reaction that I feel they are capable of generating.

Remembering Childhood: IV.I

9/11

From a hospital window a man watches as smoke billows from gaping holes in the World Trade Centre. His mouth drops open when the first tower crumbles likely crushing anyone in or around it. Never has he seen such devastation or loss of life.

Hearing his name he turns and approaches his wife who lies in bed.
Her eyes well with tears as she hands over their new daughter.
He cradles the small bundle, leans in close and whispers,
"Remember that something good also happened today".

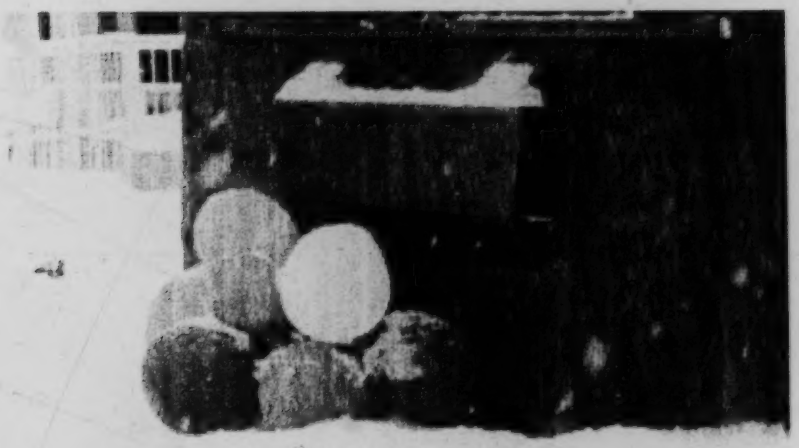
Self

Tired and lost.
No sense, no start, no end.
Wanting to be a child again.
Free, taken care of, mostly happy.
No worries, plans, responsibilities.
Lost in play .

The Novice Therapist

I know that there is a child in everyone.
A child who needs to be listened to, cared for, and nurtured.
I know that given permission, some adults will play.
With laughter comes relief.

Remembering Childhood: IV.II



9/11

What do you say to the child who has been left behind?
To the five year old who still asks nine months later, "Is daddy coming home today?"

What do you do for the child who feels abandoned?
The eight year old who lost her father to 9/11
and three months later losses her mother to cancer?

What can you possibly say or do that will ease the pain of the little one that you love?

Self

Carrying all the colours of the rainbow,
I gave you reason to look toward the sky.
I brought sunshine to your days, and a smile to your face.
In your carelessness you let me go,
and I drifted far, far away.
When you realized what you had done,
I was nowhere to be found.
Carrying all the colours of the rainbow,
I had traveled miles across the skies.

The Novice Therapist

I will accompany you on your journey for as long as I know the landscape that is your healing. When I have taken you as far as I can go I will redirect you.
I will not leave you behind.

9/11

Dear Lord,

I'm sorry I was a bad kid.
If only I'd listened to daddy
and behaved like he asked me
to maybe you wouldn't have
taken him from me.

I'm sorry it's all my fault.
If only I'd tried harder and
done better in school maybe
he'd still be here today.

I'm sorry for so much.
Please could
I have another chance.
I'll be good.
I promise.

Self

How is it that I am here when my being was not meant to be.
Left behind before I arrived, my breath was only possibility.
What shall I accomplish to prove it all worthwhile,
and who will be the judge?

The Novice Therapist

I must remember that there are many ways to abandon you in your time of need. To be a caring helper I must be conscious of my intent and conscientious in my actions. I must remember to look ahead without leaving you behind.

Theme V: Struggling

Struggling

Many said that the world suddenly felt smaller after 9/11. Shared grief and suffering united neighbors who struggled to get on with the tasks of life. The suffering endured by strangers suddenly became relevant. Issues not previously focussed on were now at the forefront.

The images selected for this theme represent the pain that comes with the struggle to endure hardship, and the courage that it takes to persevere.

Struggling: V.I

9/11

Hardships of this magnitude are new to me, but they are commonplace for you. In the far away world that you call your own you suffer atrocities that I dare not imagine. Daily you hide, compromising your values in order to obey those in power. You are so brave.

Self

How much effort does it take to survive?

The Novice Therapist

I will keep in mind that you might not want my help.
I am not the only one and ours is not the only way possible.

I will keep in mind that I am but a guide on one leg of your journey. At the end of the day you have your own tools to access and your own resources to sustain you.

Struggling: V.II

9/11

Your courage, like ice,
must crumble when it
encounters terrifying
obstacles.
Still, it does not disappear.
Strong underwater
currents are hidden
beneath your landscape of
blue and white.
Deep crevasses and
mounds of ice are
evidence of your
determination to persevere
in the toughest season of
life.

Self

It is not change itself that I fear,
for I am good at hiding.
Far above the roaring waters and miles away from the fire
I can only faintly hear the danger.
What I fear is what I feel
when the bridge breaks or the brush ignites.
When I touch and see and breathe
I am in pain.

The Novice Therapist

I will remember to make my well being a priority.
Learning to balance my mind, body and spirit
will be a life long goal.

Struggling: V.III

9/11

Since losing her mother to 9/11 she has not cried.
Her friends at school are surprised by how normal she appears,
and people compliment her on how well she is handling herself.

What no one knows is how terrified she really feels. How she puts on a brave face so as not to upset her father. How she blames herself for not being sick that day so that her mother would have stayed home from work. How she has nightmares of being trapped in burning buildings and fears being by herself.

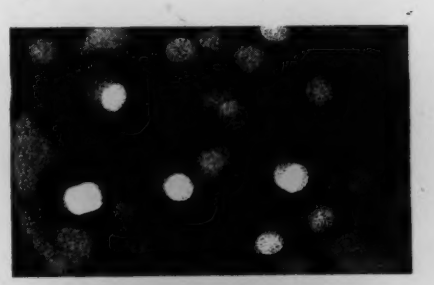
Self

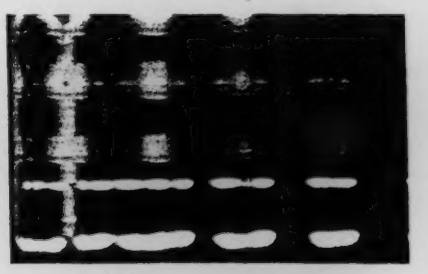
It is a challenge for me to shift my gaze internally.
To seek affirmation within myself instead of looking outward.

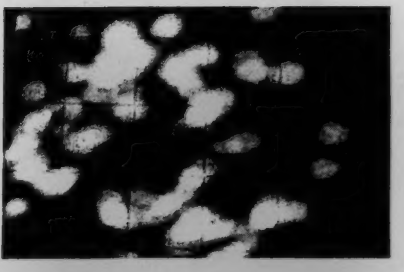
The Novice Therapist

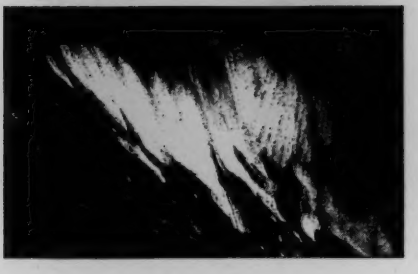
I will encourage you to remove your mask,
and give you permission to be yourself.
I will encourage you to let down your guard and feel, and
will remember to affirm your experiences.

Theme VI: Searching







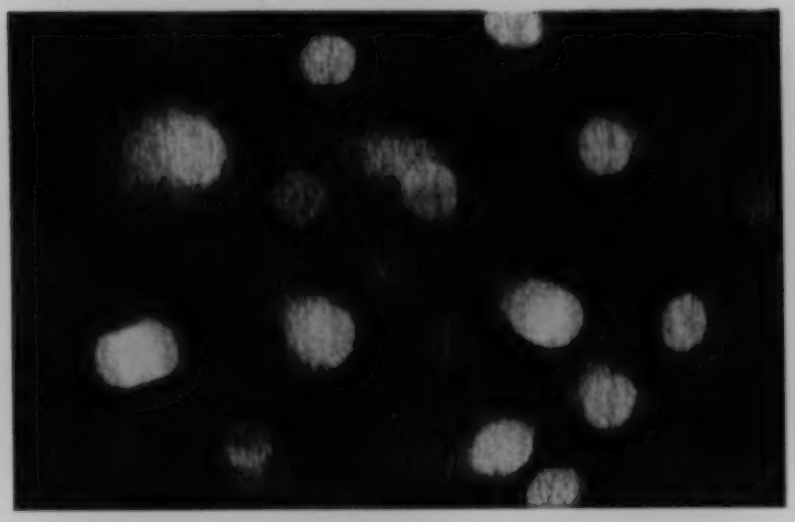


Searching

Clouds of debris billowed out into the streets of New York city on September 11th leaving behind layers of dust and silt. The haze became symbolic of the confusion, the change, and the overwhelming sense that our vision of the world had been altered.

There were several photographs in this process that appear as these do: abstracted and out of focus. I initially considered discarding some of them and am now grateful that I did not. For me these images provided a powerful metaphor for all of the searching that took place in the months following 9/11. People searched for loved ones, but also searched for love, understanding, and peace. For me they represent a search for self and are symbolic of the aftermath of 9/11 and my personal journey.

Searching: VI.I



9/11

"Focus" you tell yourself.
There must be something that I am supposed to gain from this. Something I am meant to take away that will make your death less tragic. Something, anything that will give meaning to your shortened life.
Nothing comes.
Clarity remains an illusion. Resolution seems impossible.

Self

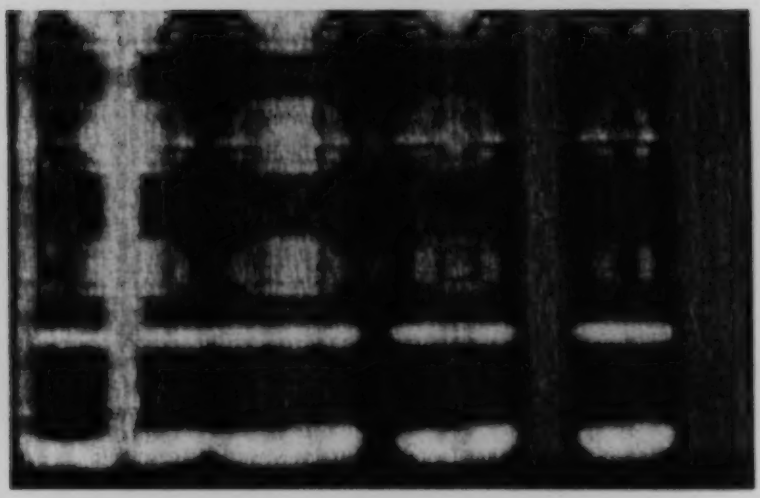
Why? How come? What for?
My search has led to more questions, none of which have answers.
I don't like this. I was taught that if I did not know I was to seek and find, not just seek.
Perhaps if I relax and back away the answers will come.
I'll have to wait and see.

The Novice Therapist

I must keep in mind that although I am an expert at theories and models I am not an expert at you. I do not hold the key, the reason or the answer.
I will not pretend to.

I must keep in mind that some questions simply have no answers. I will encourage reflection and searching. I will honor acceptance of the unknown.

Searching: VI.II



9/11

The streets of New York were wall papered with pictures of loved ones unaccounted for. Some families chose to continue their search long after the recovery efforts had ended. Carrying posters of loved ones they held out hope that good news might still arrive. Some were unwilling to apply for the death certificates that would put an end to their search,
and possibly signify that they had given up.
I wonder if searching simply prolonged their grief. Or perhaps it gave them purpose in the midst of chaos, and provided hope in a time of despair.
I wonder what I would do.

Self

If windows are a way of seeing the world
how come my view is clouded?

The Novice Therapist

I will remember to consider life from your perspective,
keeping in mind that your view of the world likely differs from mine.
I will remind myself that your reality is as real to you as mine is to me.
I will respect what you bring with you, and take the time to get to know you.
I will allow myself to be curious enough to look at the world through your viewfinder.

Searching: VI.III

9/11

In the days after you died I often wondered if you had the answers I was
looking for. The reason for what had happened,
something to make sense of it all.
In my search I found nothing tangible, just fragments of possibilities.
I guess this will have to be enough for now.

Self

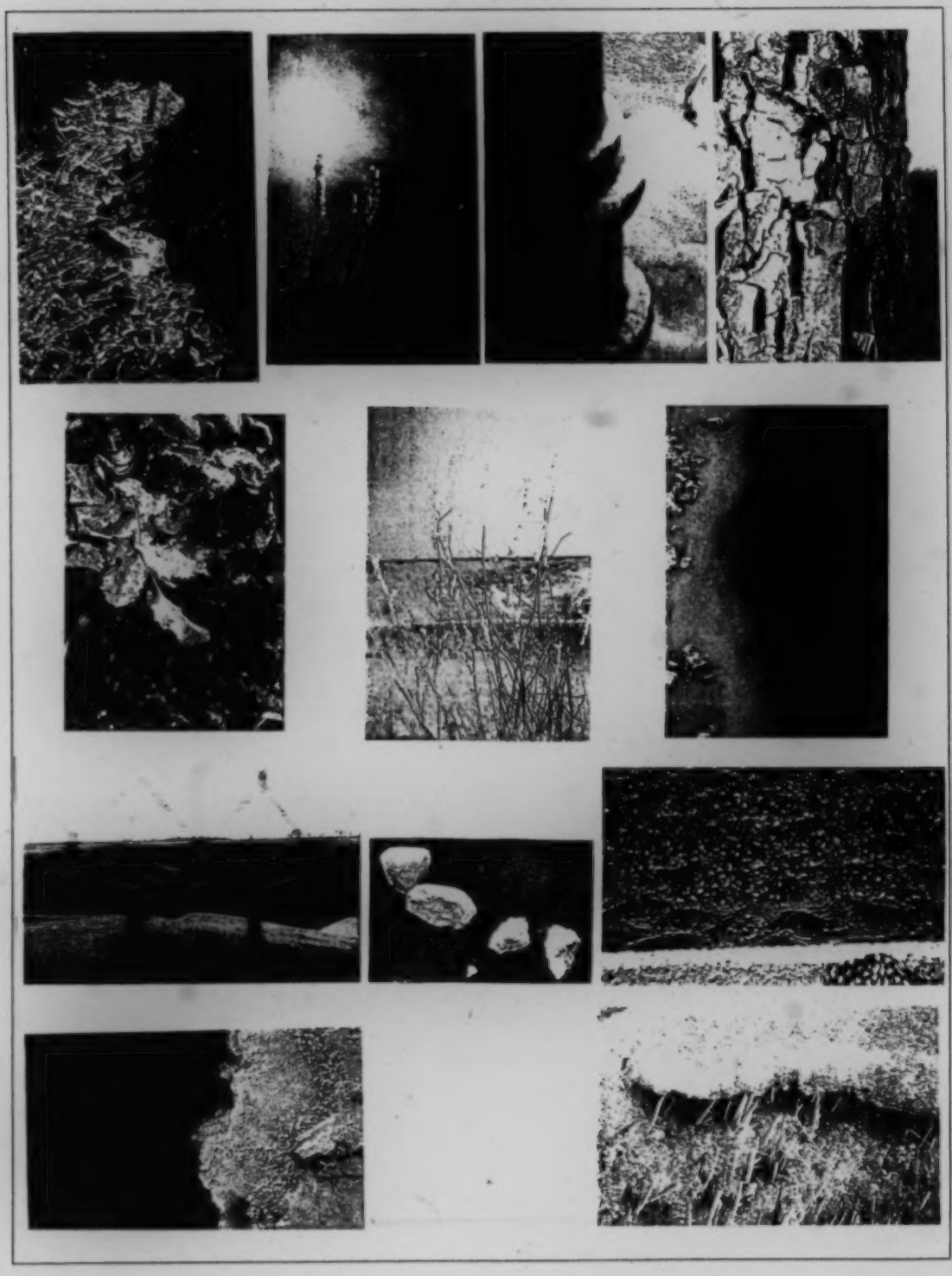
Come and visit me in my dreams, I invite you.
Meet me in that place where our worlds touch,
so that together we can dance.
Visit me often, so as not to forget the way.

The Novice Therapist

I wonder about that which I cannot see.
Those subtle changes in the energy between us,
and the way a new possibility suddenly arises.

I wonder about that which I cannot touch.
The shift that occurs when awareness dawns,
and tension drifts away.

Theme VII: Noticing



Noticing

In the months that followed 9/11 some people began to look at things differently. Some began to see the world in black and white, drawing clear distinctions between us and them. Others started to look at their family life in a new way, seeing patterns and partnerships as if for the first time. Some people began to notice little pleasures that had previously gone unnoticed.

The images chosen for this theme capture the beauty of nature that can only be seen when we really take the time to look. They recorded moments when I began noticing the world around me.

Noticing: VII.I

9/11

It was easier to see the world in black and white. Concrete thoughts left no room for nagging doubts. The clarity of contrast seemed simple, satisfying. Scanning the landscape with a template ensured that we would find what we were looking for. Good and evil.

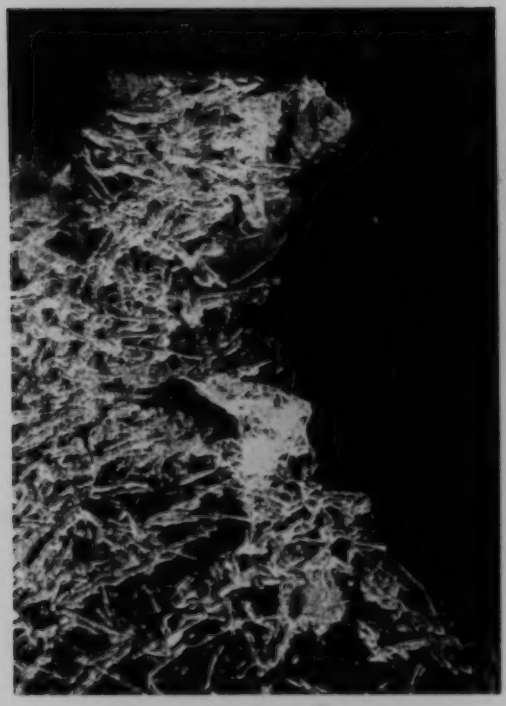
Self

In my hurry I almost did not hear the whisper.
I stopped mid step to listen, but heard nothing. Waiting, I looked around.
The season was changing right in front of me.
I stood very still and watched, feeling like I was the only one in the world.
It was then that I noticed possibility. It was in that moment that I sensed opportunity, felt hope, and saw that I had the power to choose.

The Novice Therapist

I plan to continue to try to think outside the box.
I look forward to learning new approaches to problems and to exploring new pathways to healing. I am committed to ensuring that my focus does not narrow too much, so that I have room to grow.

Noticing: VII.II



9/11

9/11 reminded us that life is fragile, precious, and fleeting.
It slowed us down, temporarily giving us the opportunity to focus on
the beauty in the everyday.
The little miracles that ordinarily would have gone unnoticed.
We were reminded that there were scenic spots along our journey,
visible only if we took the time to notice them.

Self

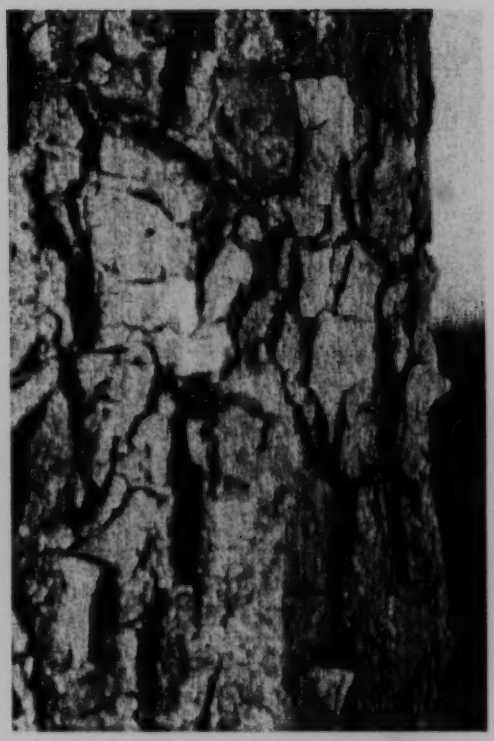
How delicately beauty balances.
Holding onto the moment
as life passes by.

The Novice Therapist

I have to take the time to notice the small changes that take place.
To congratulate you on your accomplishments
and acknowledge the effort it must take for you to change.
I have to take the time to notice when things between us are not going well.
When you are lost, when I am tired, or when we are simply stuck.
I have to take the time to notice and make the time to reflect.

9/11

September 11th left imprints
not only on the earth and in the
air, but on our psyches.
Fragmented bits of what
happened that day settled onto
the backdrop of our lives,
creating complex patterns and
textures in the fabric of our
existence.
Here to stay, these patterns
become meaningful.
They show us that we are both
complicated and beautiful.
They tell us that we can endure
hardships and take from them
something valuable that only
we may know.



Self

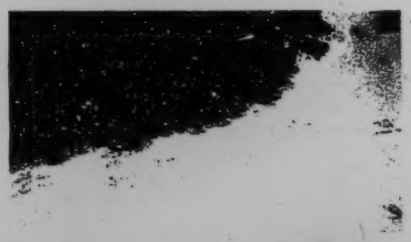
Weathering
the experience
of life
is what makes us
beautiful.

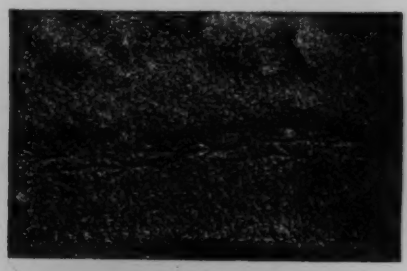
The Novice Therapist

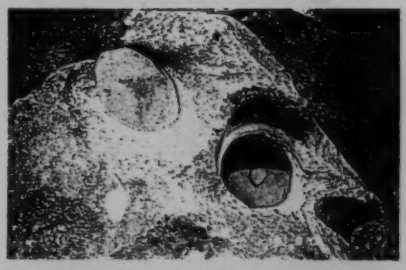
I have to remember that intellect and wisdom are very different qualities.
I am humbled by your life experience.

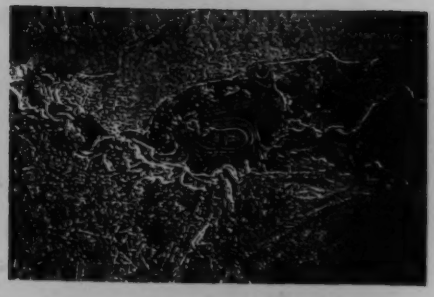
I have to remember that we all have gifts.
They are within our reach if only we know where to look.

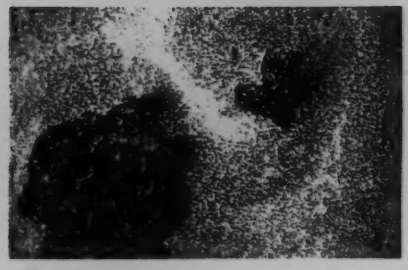
Theme VIII: Choosing











Choosing

The sense of powerlessness that prevailed on September 11th did not stick around for long. When people started to notice beauty in places they least expected it they began to realize that they had choices in life. Incapable of changing the past, they sensed that perhaps something could be gained from the pain. Post 9/11 some took the opportunity to reconnect with estranged loved ones, and others chose to better themselves.

The images in this theme reflect the nature of change in a relationship and the capacity to make healthy choices.

9/11

Why do we choose
similar over different?
Familiar versus novel?
Why do we judge, keep tally, counter and alienate?
Why do we still create barriers that divide
when we could be constructing bridges to unite?

Self

I am in my own world. As are you.
Two worlds separated by mere inches…or maybe miles.
It is difficult to say just how far apart, or how close we are.
We hold keys to our past and bury our secrets.
Am I a mirror of you?
Or are you simply a reflection of myself?
Perhaps at some point in time we can spill over and become one,
holding onto our individual foundations,
yet welcoming the essence of one another.

The Novice Therapist

I will strive to maintain healthy boundaries within our relationship so we both remain as healthy and as safe as possible. Aware of where you end and I begin we can move forward separately yet together.

Choosing: VIII.II

9/11

Sixty four floors up, a group of firefighters felt a large explosion rattle the building. Deciding to turn back they came across an injured woman who was struggling down the stairwell. They came to her aide and encouraged her to continue. Walking with her their descended nearly sixty floors in partial darkness and smoke. When they arrived on the fourth floor she stopped, unsure if she could continue. At that moment the building collapsed above them.

Miraculously all seven survived the crushing weight of over one hundred stories of concrete. They were told that they were likely in just the right place at just the right time. The firefighters called the woman their guardian angel for guiding their pace on the way down. One said that God gave them the courage to help her so that she in turn could save them.

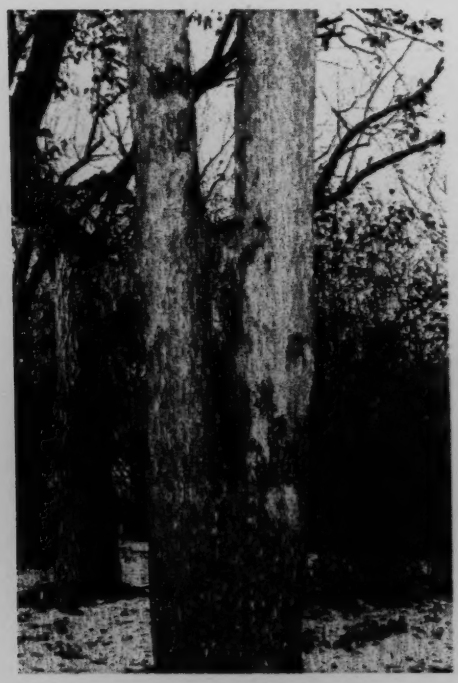
Self

There are moments when I do not know what to do.
Then you remind me that you are there
to walk beside me if I ask you to.
It is comforting knowing that in you I have found a friend.
Someone who does not care
how I walk or what I wear
but who just cares to know about me.

The Novice Therapist

It is okay for me to ask for help from helpers. I know that when I am overloaded I am no help to you and no help to me. I will be responsible for my self-care.

Choosing: VIII.III



9/11

Deciding to heal after the tragedy of 9/11 could not have been easy. With the deaths of nearly 3,000 people came a multitude of memorial services, funerals, ceremonies, and of course media coverage. In many ways the healing process was complicated because of the constant public reminders of the pain and suffering. Deciding to heal was a brave step, and will likely take a lifetime.

Self

I choose to grow apart from you because it feels right. I am still firmly rooted at the base, and this strong foundation provides me with the stability I need to grow straight and tall. Because I have a strong connection to you
I will not forget where I have come from.

The Novice Therapist

I am on my own healing journey alongside yours.
Wounded healers are still healers provided they are tending to their wounds.

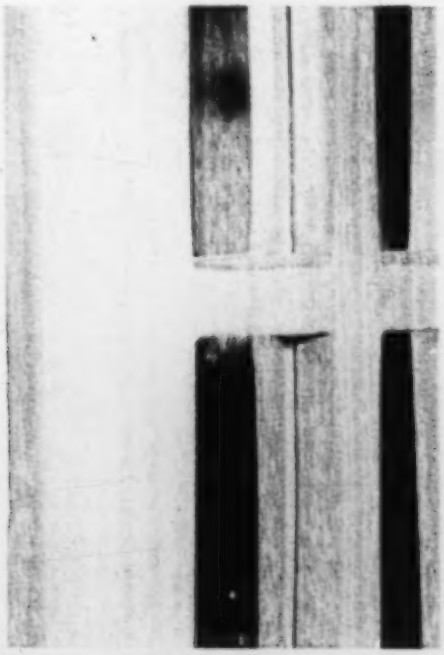
Theme IX: Coming Home

Coming Home

The events of September 11th left many unanswered questions. Coming to terms with the unknown led many people to seek comfort within themselves, their community, and with a Higher Power. Individuals reported wanting to gain a sense of spirituality, and the media reported a higher attendance at churches across the nation.

Along my journey of discovery there were moments of serenity, peace and contemplation. Many of these moments were found in nature. Light seemed to play an important role in the images, lending a mystical quality to the experience. The images in this theme were chosen primarily for their metaphorical richness.

Coming Home: IX.I



9/11

9/11 brought terror into daily life and left behind a residue of fears such as the fear of the unknown, the fear of losing control, and for some the fear of evil. Responses to these powerful fears were varied. Some stepped away from the beliefs they had previously held, and reacted with anger that their loved ones were taken away. Others clung to signs of a Higher Power, taking comfort in offerings of unconditional love. Others felt for the first time that their spiritual well-being needed to be nurtured and began searching within themselves.

Self

FAITH
...in me.

The Novice Therapist

I will remember that our spiritual self is an integral component of the healing process. That some wounds are spiritual wounds.

I will invite you to explore your own sense of spirituality and in turn teach me about your beliefs.

Coming Home: IX.II

9/11

Noticing the beauty in the world and experiencing the power to choose, things were no longer out of your control. You had the power to make a decision about what to do with your life and this both inspired and terrified you. Stepping off of the beaten track you sensed you were taking a huge risk. Faith in the process is what got you through.

Self

Do we all have a destination in life?
A purpose that is pre-determined?
Perhaps if we just face forward, hold on tight, and storm ahead things will pass. Maybe if we don't take the time to wander off this way and that nothing will get us and we won't risk getting lost.
No looking back.
No regrets.
No contemplating what could have been.
Just along for the ride. The rest will take care of itself.

The Novice Therapist

I wonder where my developing spirituality will guide me in my future practice. How it will influence my therapeutic relationship and how I approach a problem.
I wonder if our spiritual selves will meet and I wonder if they will welcome each other.

9/11

With an injured heart and
a beaten spirit, how do
you carry on?
Faced with empty rooms
and shattered dreams, how
do you find the courage?

Perhaps you have come to
realize that there are no
guarantees in life. That
adventurous spirits are
invited to travel
unpredictable paths.
That one day you may be
called upon to create your
own direction,
your own purpose.

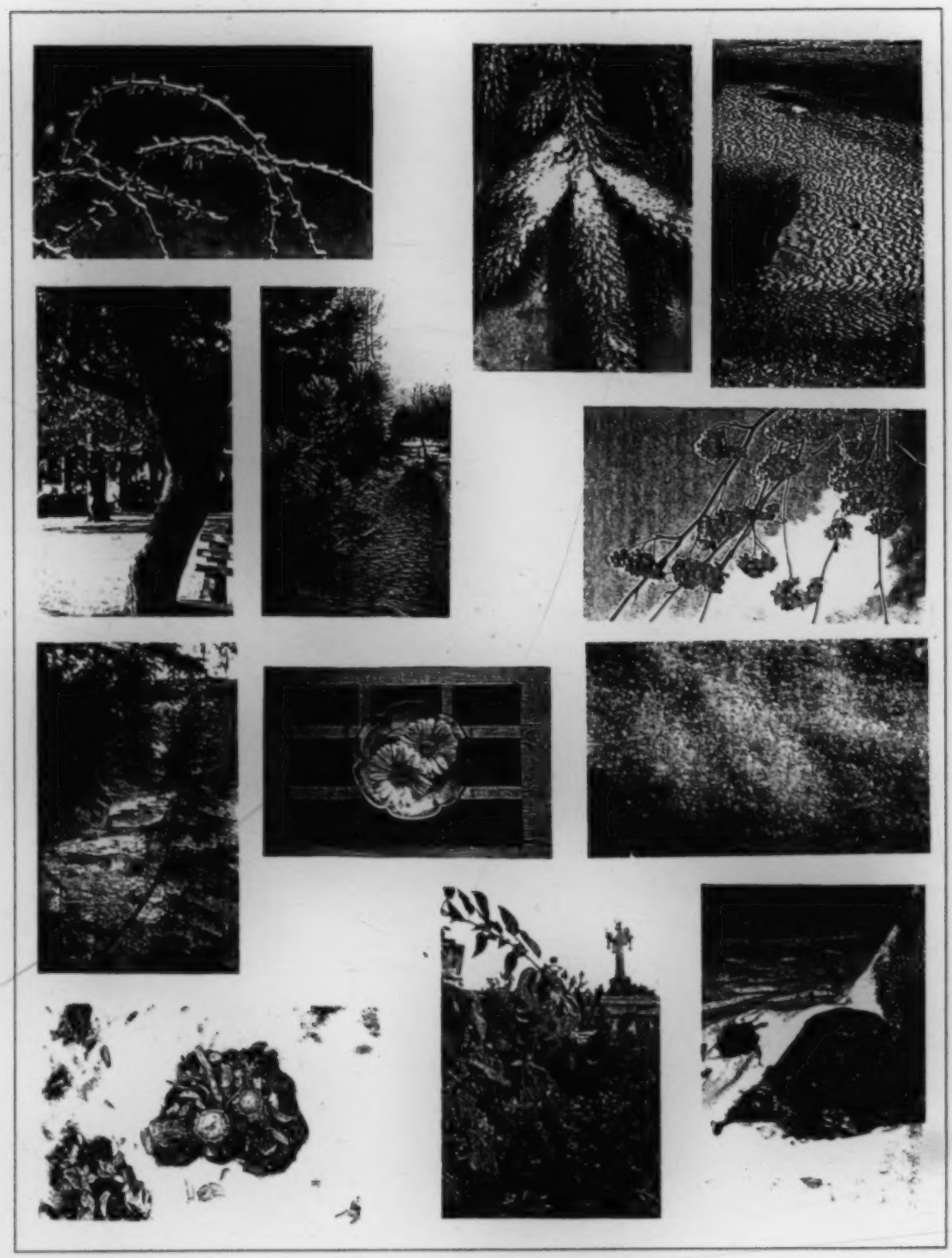
Self

Some describe the journey of life as being full of crossroad - intersections where they must contemplate in which direction to continue. I have faced those decisions before, but this one is different. There is no fork to choose from. The path has abruptly ended. A barren landscape lies before me, challenging me to continue. I feel invited to create my own way so that I may step forward with confidence.

The Novice Therapist

I will have faith in you.

Theme X: Accepting



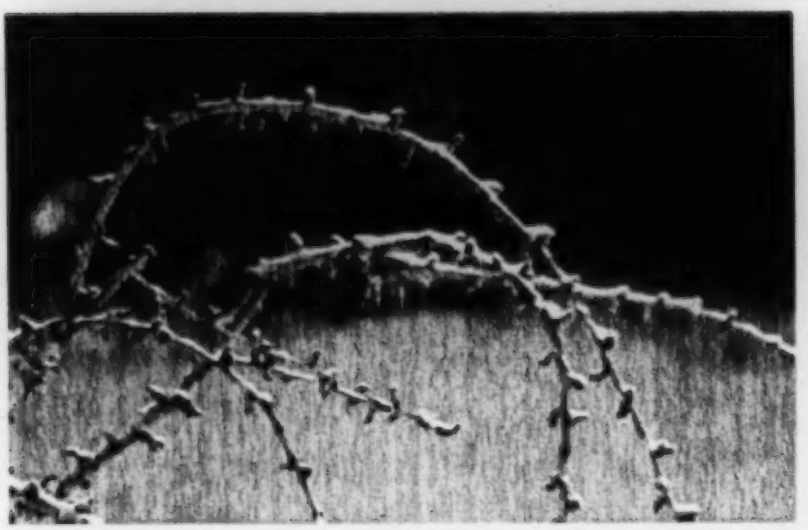
Accepting

So many tragic things happened on September 11th. Nearly 3000 people died in the events of that day, leaving countless more victimized and suffering from grief. No one can change what took place on 9/11, and no one has the power to bring back loved ones. For those who have been on a journey of grief and healing, the beginning of fall will likely always bring memories of 9/11.

It will be important to be able to celebrate the birth of a new season instead of dwelling on the loss of the old. Beauty, tranquility, abundance, and peace can be found in all seasons. Breathing in crisp fall air, and accepting the new hues on mother nature's palette can nurture our sense of hope. With this hope we can go forward, and experience the joy in nature, and the joy within ourselves.

The images chosen for the final theme reflect moments of peace, hope, joy, and serenity. Looking at them now I can still hear the crunching of leaves under my feet and feel the cold air against my face.

Accepting: X.I



9/11

For people who had already lost loved ones to suicide, illness and violence, 9/11 became a test of endurance. The magnitude of the tragedy accumulated quickly, making the weight of despair almost unbearable.

I hope that people can look back and see that that they may have bowed under pressure but that in the end they were not broken. That history may have scarred them, but that new growth is possible.

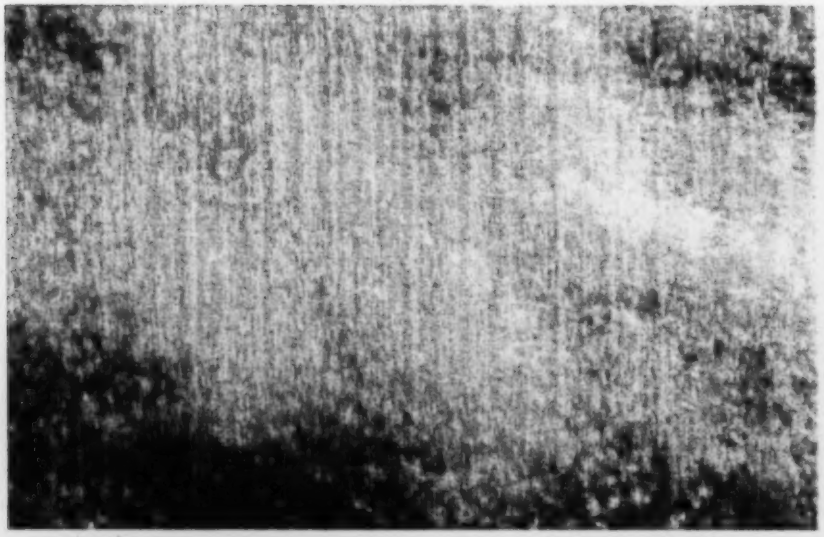
Self

I feel most hopeful when I reconnect with nature.
In those moments of pure stillness and peacefulness
I feel alive, purposeful, and loved.

The Novice Therapist

I will embrace the recursive nature of my hope,
welcoming what will be into what is.
I will share my hope with you, and invite you to do the same.

Accepting: X.II



9/11

For many people 9/11 was like a re-awakening.
Coming alive in a world full of colours not previously noticed.
New landscapes and new possibilities.
9/11 gave people the opportunity to see the abundance of
goodness in those around them, and in themselves.
Sharing, communing, and loving became vital to individual healing.

Self

I now see the landscape as a reflection of myself,
and I see parts of nature reflected in me.
When I see beauty I feel it, and when I experience joy I find it around me.

The Novice Therapist

I hope to dance with you along our journey.
To find rhythm in our step so that we may glide more often than we stumble.
I hope to swim with you in this vast ocean.
To remain afloat so that we may see the shoreline as it approaches.

9/11

9/11 washed over us like an unexpected tidal wave. It washed away our protective layers, leaving us exposed and helpless.

Deciding to rebuild took courage. Accepting that our lives were altered we gave up the fight, and joined with others. Together we found hope and began to rebuild our dream. Accepting and rebuilding is what gave us the strength to grieve.

Self

A sandy beach on a frozen river.
A hope for a better day.
A surprising find in a winter month.
A hope for a better world.

The Novice Therapist

I hope
...to find the goodness in people.
...to learn something from everyone I meet.
...to remain passionate about life.
...to grow until I die.

CHAPTER SIX

Creative Synthesis

> *"I now believe in such a process of searching, studying, of being open to significant dimensions of experience in which comprehension and compassion mingle, in which intellect, emotion and spirit are integrated, in which intuition, spontaneity and self-exploration are seen as components of a unified experience, in which both discovery and creation are reflections of creative research into human ventures, human processes, and human experiences" (Moustakas, 1967b, p. 107).*

A healing journey

As stated in the third chapter, the challenge in this type of study is to pull everything together into a final form that does it justice. The creative synthesis grows out of the Illumination and Explication phases and gives new meaning to the research. When I began this journey I had no idea what my creative synthesis would look like, let alone whether I would make it that far. I did make it that far, and the end result was worth the effort.

The intent of the creative synthesis within this study was to shed light on both inquiries within the original research question, "what was my experience of grief and loneliness following 9/11", and "what am I learning that I will take with me into this profession?". What I discovered as I neared the end of this journey is that the lens really does point in both directions: out into the world and into my soul. In fact the entire process was experienced through a looking glass, with my personal self and my history on one side of the mirror, and my professional self and my future on the other. Keeping in step with this complementary process and mindful of Ronna Jevne's (2000) metaphor, the creative synthesis became both an image and an echo. The image responded to the first inquiry within the question, and the second inquiry can be heard in the echo. The

image is essentially my experience of grief and loneliness following 9/11, and the echo is a metaphor for all that I am learning that I will take with me into the profession. Together they encapsulate what began as an inquiry and ended in a healing journey within an inquiry.

The Image

I had dozens of photographs spread out before me in no particular arrangement, and they lay there for hours as they had many days previous. It was not with conscious effort that my eyes strayed to one photo again and again and not particularly clear to me why I picked it up and stared at it for minutes on end. Then it hit me. This was the one. This was my final photograph. This was me.

I had been on a walk in the woods with a close friend and her daughter when I noticed a small plant at the side of the path. I vaguely remember being attracted to the light at the time and picked up my camera in response. When I later viewed the photo I was not immediately drawn to it. It was placed in a stack of images where it remained for some time. When I had my Illumination I was overwhelmed by the metaphors that appeared before me. Out of the hundreds of images I had collected, this one became symbolic of my heuristic journey, one that went beyond my outer self and cast light on the shadow that is my soul.

Image:

The echo

After the image had offered itself up it took some time for me to realize that an echo could potentially resonate. In the meantime I contemplated many possibilities for the written response in my creative synthesis. One of my initial thoughts was to develop a healing model that incorporated all of the themes that emerged in the development of this study. I immediately recognized the thought as stemming from the mind of a student hardwired to produce a product, an explanation, or an academic conclusion. Other ideas that flowed in and out of my consciousness included creating a drawing or a collage. These possibilities did not feel right and I decided not to change mediums. I refocused my attention to the humanistic perspective, reminding myself that I was allowed to embrace the holistic nature of the process. It was not until I stepped back into the heuristic process and allowed tacit knowing and illuminations to guide me that the echo became audible.

The challenge in the creative synthesis, and in the echo in particular was twofold. The primary challenge was the difficulty I experienced putting words to the feelings and learnings that resonated from the image. In many ways the image alone spoke louder to me than did the echo. The second challenge was deciding on a voice. My responses to images thus far had been on three levels: 9/11, Self and the Novice Therapist. In the echo I decided to use the voice of the Self, as it bridges a personal grief reaction and the world of the therapist.

The echo does not contain explicit learnings as I feel these were reflected previously in the Novice Therapist responses. Instead the echo resonates from the image, and reflects my personal process which will impact any future therapeutic encounter.

Honouring the process brought closure to this inquiry, but emphasized for me how little I do know. Resonating within the echo are my learnings and the awarenesses that have the potential to pass through the looking glass from myself into the therapeutic relationship.

Echo:

Breaking through familiar layers of comfort and protection, I risked exposing a history of ***Wounding***. Stepping out of the shadows I opened myself up to a new way of being. Sharp intakes of breath let me know I was alive, and blinding rays of warmth confirmed that I was real.

With this rebirth I realized I had been ***Grieving*** the loss of my shadow for some time. When it became visible I found myself ***Retreating*** into solitude to fully experience it lest it fade away. Concentrating on those parts of me that were normally hidden I listened, and for the first time heard my voice. It called out to me as a child, inviting me to nurture it. ***Remembering my childhood*** made me feel whole again.

With a new focus I saw that I had been ***Struggling*** to grow in someone else's shadow. Straining under a burden of guilt I had a difficult time letting go of my tendency to rescue and protect. Learning to turn from judgement I slowly began to grow stronger. Branching out in new directions I began ***Searching*** for faith to welcome the unknown. Trusting that with darkness came shades of gray I became more aware of where I stood in my surroundings. Looking around I began ***Noticing*** new patterns, new colours, and possibilities. The power of choice brought both fear and freedom, and in that place where they overlapped I felt promise.

Choosing to honour my process I chose to honour myself and my place in this world. Deciding to fortify my roots I basked in the sun when it shone and absorbed nutrients from the earth when it rained. ***Coming home*** to nature and to my Self I embraced the mystical. Experiencing beauty and tranquillity I began to own my spirituality for the first time.

I have learned that ***Accepting*** my whole self including my shadow gives voice to my soul. Honouring my process invites hope in times of despair and creates an abundance of self-learnings. The opportunities for growth are never ending.

Sharp contrasts in light and shadow will remind me of this journey. Entering into periods of darkness and welcoming illuminations is what highlighted my soul.

Epilogue

This heuristic research has been a journey of discovery for me both personally and professionally. I have gained more insight and developed more as a person during this process than I have at any other time in my life. Having gone through this growth experience I have witnessed the beauty of the emergent nature of the inquiry. I learned to trust the process, and in doing so have learned to trust myself.

Gaining insight into my struggles since 9/11 I am now much more aware of what I bring into a therapeutic relationship. I believe with conviction that as a therapist I must be aware of the experiences that have shaped who I am. Without this awareness I have no reflection to learn from, no shadow to carry with me.

I see the challenge of a therapeutic encounter as being somewhat like trying to catch something very delicate without breaking it, something heavy without dropping it, or something ugly without turning away. To face the pain of others I have to know my own. As Wolfelt (2002) noted, "to help people move toward reconciliation means to be open to your own experience with grief" (p. 101).

Moustakas (1967b) believed that when people are guided by the real nature of their own experience, they are genuinely present in their meetings with others. Being genuinely present and real in a therapeutic alliance is of utmost importance to me. "Genuine relating involves a recognition of the mystery and awe, the capriciousness and unpredictability of life. It means trusting unknown developments in experience and a willingness to follow the uncertain course that results in a creative realization of one's own potentialities" (Moustakas, 1967, p. 17). Surrendering myself to this process I was

guided by my experience. I trusted the intuitive processes and allowed them to guide me. I deepened an already strong appreciation of the mystery of creativity and imagination.

Zen master Shunryu Suzuki is quoted as saying, "the mind of the beginner is empty, free of the habits of the expert, ready to accept, to doubt and open to all possibilities" (DeBecker, 1997, p. 103). Setting out on my career as a therapist I will take this with me. I know from experience that valuable learnings occur when one is open to them. I have never been comfortable adhering to pure schools of thought, on tried and tested methods. I now see therapy as a creative synthesis in waiting: a bricolage. There truly is no work of art apart from human experience.

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